

# **MIRROR OF TASTE**

## **DRAMATIC CENSOR.**

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### **HISTORY OF THE STAGE.**

#### **THE FRENCH STAGE.**

[Continued from page 338, Vol. III.]

**T**HE introduction of the opera by the influence and agency of cardinal Mazarine, which happened in the year 1647, made a sort of revolution in the theatre; and therefore constitutes an era in the history of the French stage, the novelty and singularity of which claim particular notice. But before entering upon it, we must take a final leave of the dramatists who flourished contemporaneously with Corneille, and a concise review of the pieces they brought forth after the death of Richelieu.

Tristan was a dramatic poet of some consideration. He wrote several plays; some of which had a tolerable share of reputation and success. His *Mariamne*, however, was the best, and by far the most productive to him of profit and reputation.

Of Scudery we have already spoken as one of the agents of cardinal Richelieu. After the death of his master, he produced a tragedy called *Axiane*, written in prose. As he threw himself wholly on the cardinal, and chose rather to build his fame and his fortunes on that powerful man's patronage and influence than

on his own honourable efforts, he became the mere slave of his will—did as his eminence directed him, and instead of following, as a man of real genius would have done, the impulses of his muse wherever she invited him, and indulging himself in the vein of writing dictated by his own imagination, he suffered himself to be driven by the cardinal who, in this instance, and perhaps it is the only one to be enumerated in his life, is allowed to have been correct. His eminence advised Scudery never to write a play in prose. In this he was right, because Scudery wrote in a vitious inflated style, formed upon that of Seneca: but on the death of the cardinal, an event by which our poet was liberated from all control, and when therefore he had no longer any fear of indulging the bent of his own inclination, he gave the rein to his fancy, such as it was, and wrote *Axiane* in prose. It is impossible to say how much better he might or might not have written, had he been left all along to the free exercise of his own natural genius; but whether it was that his genius, by being so long fettered, had lost its powers, or that his mind was naturally crippled and imbecile, his *Axiane* was immediately damned, and with it the name of *its* author sunk into oblivion. Finding his own deficiency,—perhaps despairing of the public taste being sufficiently refined to relish his composition—and perceiving that his mean cooperation with Richelieu to destroy the fame of Corneille, had brought him into general disrepute, he yielded to the persuasion of his friends, and abandoned dramatic writing for the rest of his life, though he lived full four and twenty years after.

SCARRON, the celebrated burlesque writer, well known as the author of the comical romance, lived at this time.—Deformed, licentious, volatile, and filled with a rich vein of comic humour, he was, at the age of twenty-seven, nailed down to the exercise of his genius by the total loss of the use of his lower limbs. He was forty-one years of age when a young lady actually married him, and made a sacrifice of her person, which was recommended by exquisite beauty, and by extreme youth, she being only sixteen years of age, to a heap of deformity, imbecility, and caprice. This young lady, whose name was Frances D'Aubigne, afterwards received the title of Maintenon, from an estate of that name, purchased for and presented to her by Lewis the Fourteenth, who, though two years younger than herself, privately married her in 1686, at which time she had been twenty-five years a widow; Scarron, her husband,

having died in 1660. The pleasantry which enlivened the conversation of Scarron was transfused into all his compositions. Few persons pretending to taste have neglected to read his "*Comical Romance, or Adventures of a Company of Strolling Players*," which is replete with sterling humour. His travestie of Virgil's *Æneid* is less known, but abounds with humour also. His first dramatic piece, called *Jodelet, or the Maître Valet*, was brought out in 1745, and four other comedies followed within the space of four years. The last of these, called *l'Heretier Ridicule*, so amazingly tickled the fancy of the young king of France, Lewis XIV., when only twelve years of age, that he had it performed three times in one day.

In 1653, Scarron brought out his *Don Japhet D'Armenie*, which he laid at the feet of the young king with the following whimsical dedication prefixed to it.

## TO THE KING.

SIRE,

Any other *bel-esprit* but myself would have begun with telling your majesty that you are the greatest king upon earth; that you were more knowing in the art of reigning at fourteen years old than the oldest gray-beard; that you are the best made among men, much more among kings; and in short that you have nothing to do but to stretch out your arms and touch the top of mount Lebanon, and as much farther as you please. All this is very handsome and virtually true; but I shall say nothing of it here. I shall only say that since your power is so great, I intreat you to use it to do me a little good; for if you were to do me a little good I should be much merrier—if I were much merrier, I should write merrier comedies—if I were to write merrier comedies, you would be more diverted—and if you were more diverted, your bounty would not be thrown away. All this seems so very reasonable that I am persuaded I should think the conclusion fair, even were I as great a king as your majesty, instead of a poor miserable devil as I really am, but nevertheless

Your majesty's very obedient

And very faithful subject and servant,

SCARRON.

In 1654, Scarron brought out his *l'Ecolier de Salamanque*. This comedy occasioned a quarrel between him and Boisrobert, which continued to rage, to the end of their lives, with the most virulent rancour. It is not always that victory and right are on the same side. This once however they were so; for Scarron was unfairly treated by Boisrobert, and Boisrobert had sufficient cause to repent

his having put the invenomed wit of Scarron into active exertion against him.

It seems that Scarron was in the habit of reading over his works to his particular friends and acquaintances: Boisrobert was one of these, and to him as well as others *l'Ecolier de Salamanque* was read, by parcels as it was composed, with great glee and satisfaction to the author and to his auditors. Boisrobert was from the very beginning greatly taken with the circumstances of the play, treasured up all the parts as he heard them read, and as he received the plot and incidents by piecemeal, went home and worked upon them, and that too with such despatch and effect that he had built a perfect play upon the foundation supplied by the unsuspecting cripple; and, before the original was finished, brought it out without scruple, hesitation, or remorse, under the name of the *Genereux Enemis*. Nor was this all: for T. Corneille, brother of the illustrious Peter, who also wrote plays, founded upon Boisrobert's stolen *Genereux Enemis* another play, which he called the *Illustres Enemis*, and this copy also came out before Scarron's original, which, of course, had to encounter a twofold disadvantage. When *l'Ecolier de Salamanque* appeared, Boisrobert had the audacity as well as the baseness to decry its merit, and to vilify Scarron publicly for stealing it from him; and did it so pertinaciously and plausibly, that if there had not been other witnesses of our poet's claim, his title to it would in all probability have never been acknowledged by the public.

Scarron resented this, and fell upon Boisrobert with all the force and acumen which genius could lend to anger. Having infinitely more wit, and being moreover a much more vigorous and elegant writer than his treacherous adversary, he dealt out his resentment against him in a style so lively, pointed with such bitter invective, and imbued with such invenomed satire, that the unhappy culprit never ceased to feel the effects of his perfidy till the grave put an end to his troubles, which was in 1662, two years after the death of Scarron.

The same year that Scudery brought out his *Axiane*, a curious dramatic poet, of the name of LA SERRE, produced a tragedy called *Sainte Catherine*, and in the succeeding year another called *Thesee*. He wrote besides five other plays—all of which were abominably bad, but had great success through the influence of cardinal Richelieu. These exertions of the cardinal to counteract



the effects of truth, and to resist nature itself, were made not to serve La Serre so much as to injure Corneille.

This admired poet and chosen friend and agent of the great Richelieu, *La Serre*, may be considered as one of the most extraordinary of that fraternity of oddities, the scribblers of the world. He was librarian to the next brother of Lewis the Thirteenth, and in that station contrived to pick out from different books a quantity of literary materials, which he patched up together without method or coherence, and, writing a large quantity of heterogeneous trash in this way, got the name of an author. He had the sagacity, however to know his own deficiencies, and the cunning, rather than the candour, to acknowledge them; avowing, with much seeming pleasantry, that his propensity to writing was nothing more nor less than the mere *cacoethes scribendi*, which, as it turned to good account, he indulged in order to engage the regards of his very profitable patron, the cardinal. One day, having attended to a very long and tiresome public discourse, he embraced the orator as he descended from the rostrum, and exclaimed "My dear friend, I really did not think it possible!"—"What?" asked the other. "What!" replied *La Serre*,—"why you have uttered more nonsense in one hour than I have been able to write in twenty years; and yet I have worked hard for it too."

He used to say that he boasted one advantage over every other author: "I get rich," said he, "by writing wretched productions, while men of merit are dying of hunger." In this acknowledgment there was more candour than truth: for the thing often happens at all times and in all countries.

Another of the curiosities of the poetical corps of that day, and who, for his *singular* merit, was honoured with the favour of cardinal Richelieu, was GAUTIER DE LA CARPRENEDE. He was the author of *Cassandra*, *Cleopatra* and *Pharamond*, dull and tedious romances, now forgotten, and of thirteen dramatic pieces, which, for a long time, have had to boast of the same comfortable oblivion. Owing to patronage (for he was one of the gentlemen in ordinary to the king, and was patronized by the cardinal) he enjoyed a sort of temporary reputation. Having one day read a comedy of his, called *Clariente*, to Richelieu, the cardinal observed that the piece was tolerably good, but that some of the expressions were *lache*. Sir, said the author, in the true Gascon style, I would

have your eminence to know that nothing *lache*\* ever belonged to the house of Calprenede!

Already Boisrobert has been mentioned. He, in 1646, brought out *l'Inconnue*, which he took from the Spanish of Calderone; and in 1650, *La Jalouse de Elle Meme*, translated from Lope de Vega.

ISAAC BENSERADE, who wrote about this time, was an author of merit, and produced three plays. This gentleman was born of a noble family in Normandy, in 1612, and designed for the church, of which there was every seeming reason to suppose he would be a very respectable member. But a destiny of a far different kind overruled the project of his parents: for falling in love with Mademoiselle BELLEROSÉ, a beautiful girl and a favourite actress, he deserted the church for the airy hall of the muses, and cultivated his theatrical business with astonishing zeal and industry. He did not, however, confine his labours to the drama, but attempted every thing—nothing came amiss to him; so that from the obscurity and poverty into which his love had sunk him, he rose to popularity and wealth. He too was noticed by Richelieu, to whom he was said to be related, and from whom he acquired a pension.—As a poet, his talents were such that he divided the applauses of the town with Voiture. In the last part of his life he retired to *Gentilly*, where he employed himself in works of piety, and translated almost all the Psalms. He came by his death, which happened at the age of eighty years, in the following extraordinary manner.

He was so afflicted with the stone that he reluctantly submitted to the operation of cutting, in the doing of which the surgeon happening to puncture an artery was so alarmed for fear of the consequences that he ran away instead of checking the effusion of blood, and the unfortunate patient expired in the arms of his confessor.

ROUTROU, whom we have mentioned before, and who was the only poet that maintained even a temporary rivalry with Corneille, brought out ten pieces during the period we speak of, and no doubt possessed all the requisites of a dramatic poet of eminence. He knew character, he understood the conduct and arrangement of dramatic story, and possessed strong powers of discrimination. He

\* *Lache*, applied to writing, means loose, negligent—Applied to men, it means cowardly.

certainly stood next to, though far below, Corneille; and was as much superior to the others as Corneille was to him.

Thomas Corneille, though greatly inferior to his brother, possessed considerable merit as a dramatic poet. His genius, however, was totally different from that of his brother—the works of the one being the effusions of a mind splendid, stupendous, and too self-dependent servilely to adhere to the rules and orders of the Aristotelean school: the other having little else than plain good sense and measured regularity to boast of. Thomas wrote several plays, some of which can scarcely be considered above mediocrity, and had but very moderate success: nor was it till the year 1656, that his muse acquired any extraordinary mark of public approbation. In that year he produced a tragedy of indisputable merit, the fate of which will ever remain among the many signal monuments of French fickleness and caprice.

This tragedy, which bears the title of *Timocrate*, was followed with a degree of eagerness unexampled in the history of the drama, having been performed eighty times in regular succession without the intervention of a single performance of any other piece. For the last twelve or fourteen nights the actors attempted to announce other plays; but the audience would not listen to them: *Timocrate! Timocrate! Timocrate!* was the general cry, and *Timocrate* the players were obliged to perform. At length an actor came forward and said (impudently enough by the by) “Ladies and Gentlemen, if you are not tired of seeing *Timocrate*, we are really tired of performing it. We run the risk of forgetting all our other pieces, and the stage will sustain the greatest injury. Permit us, therefore, to represent something else.” This permission was granted, but not without murmurings of disapprobation; and, behold! *Timocrate* was never after performed or called for at that theatre!—but a still more extraordinary circumstance followed. The first representation and the singular interruption of it took place at the theatre *Au Marais*. Being suspended there by the intrusive misconduct of the actors, it was taken up by the company of the *Hotel de Bourgogne*, who were infinitely better performers than those of the theatre *Au Marais*: but there, it completely failed; for after two or three ineffectual attempts to attract the public, the benches were left quite empty every time it was announced for representation.

Of the merits of this tragedy we have no certain means of

forming an idea, as it has not found its way down to us through the press. It was however, for a time, well spoken of by T. Corneille's friends, who advised him to write no more, but build his reputation finally on *Timocrate*. The king went to see it, and spoke of it in high terms. But it became the received opinion that its uncommon success at first was owing to a surmise which prevailed that the author's brother had a share in the composition of it: yet so little was it thought of by those who some years after collected the works of the two brothers, and published them together, that it is not included among them. Nevertheless many of his pieces, at this day, keep the stage with reputation.

It is, after all, not improbable that the sudden turn of the people from *Timocrate* might, in some measure, be owing to the ascendancy which comedy was, at that period, every day acquiring over tragedy in public opinion. Moliere, the immortal Moliere, was striding rapidly to fame; his works daily rendered comedy more attractive and popular, and at length made it the chief delight of the French. On the part of Melpomene the warfare was miserably supported by T. Corneille who, in 1757, 1758, and 1759, brought out three new tragedies—*Berenice*, *Darius* and *Commode*, with but middling applause. The admirers of Melpomene, among whom the most enlightened literary men were numbered, perceiving the declension of tragedy, and apprehending its total extinction, if it did not receive some great weight to counterbalance the success of comedy under Moliere, exerted themselves to prevail on Peter Corneille to return to its support. At length they, with much seeming difficulty, succeeded and prevailed upon him once more to resume his dramatic station. Among those who most ardently interested themselves in the business was the celebrated NICHOLAS FOUCQUET, procurator general of the parliament of Paris and superintendent of the finances.\* He not only warmly urged Corneille to return to the drama, but got others, high in power, to back him in his persuasions—nay, when the poet in answer said that he should find himself awkward in a business to which he had been so long unused, and that he had not even thought of a subject, Foucquet, who possessed a fruitful mind, suggested no less than three to him, and thus overruled all the objections made by Corneille, who in all

\* This man becoming afterwards a defaulter to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling, was disgraced and banished.



probability was not a little inclined to yield to his request. That it is reasonable to think so, will appear from the pursuits of our poet in the interval which took place between his retiring from the occupation of writing for the stage and his return to it.

The Jesuits were desirous to have a translation made in the best manner of a celebrated work called *THE IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST*. That body, being remarkable no less for refined taste than for profound erudition, cast their eyes on Corneille, whom they had long held in esteem and favoured with their particular intimacy. As they knew that he was an eminent scholar as well as a fine poet, and that he had all his lifetime been a very devout christian, they thought that they should not be able to find any person so well qualified to translate the work, and accordingly applied to him: he undertook it; and it is universally allowed that he translated it finely. The work had great success; and so far as regarded pecuniary profit, reprised him most amply for the loss he sustained in quitting the stage. Yet, though the translation was generally admired and extremely popular, there were not wanting some judges who considered the style of Corneille unsuitable to it, and objected that the nature, the truth, and the simplicity of the original were lost in the blaze of grandeur and the pomp of thought which pervaded the great mind of Corneille. Of that opinion was Fontenelle who, in the language of an accomplished critic, speaking of this translation, says—"This book, though for grandeur and force the finest that ever came from the hand of man, has so little of the Evangelist, that it cannot, like that, penetrate immediately to the heart, nor seize the mind with that force, so natural and tender, which sometimes is greatly assisted by a negligence of style."

Since then dramatic poetry was that to which Corneille had the first and strongest propensity, it is rather probable that so sudden a disruption from it, and this direct application to a subject so very different from it as the translation of a work on religious topics, would rather increase than lessen his original bent, and that, even while engaged in the latter, he could not but now and then ruminate on the former with a sigh, and "cast one longing lingering look behind." In such a state of feeling, he might from prudery affect to resist; but it is most likely that he was rejoiced at the application of his friends to take up his pen again as a dramatic writer. It is highly probable too that the rapid progress which

Moliere was making to fame, had its share in exciting a laudable rivalry, and stimulating the ambition of our Corneille to secure to himself the preeminence he had acquired. Be that as it may, he complied with the requisition of his friends; and his first return to the stage was in his tragedy of *ŒDIPÉ*. This had such prodigious success that Corneille felt himself once more perfectly reconciled to the public and to the stage.

His next production was *La Toison D'or*, performed in 1660, the year in which Scarron died:—and here it is that we are called upon to make some strictures upon Corneille, which mortify and grieve us, as indeed they must every one who venerates genius, and wishes to see it at all times pay due reverence to itself: it is here we have to remark, that this truly great man, with all his merit, had not the fortitude to resist that rage for machinery and decoration which, thanks to Mazarine and his operas, pervaded France and corrupted the taste of its people. And here it is that, for the same reasons, we must revert to the introduction of that absurd species of entertainment, the opera, which we postponed doing for the purposes mentioned in our first page.

(To be continued.)

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## BIOGRAPHY.

### LIFE OF DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

OF the very extraordinary personage, whose history and character constitute the subject of the following brief sketch, more has been written than of any other man of his day. His genius and the drama of Great Britain were for a large portion of the last century so interwoven with and dependent on each other; his vast theatrical powers in the twofold office of actor and manager were so various, extensive, useful and conspicuous; and the lights which he threw upon the science of acting were at once so luminous, so just, so natural, and yet so new, that he has been for above half a century identified with the theatre; and his life and the history of the British stage have long been looked upon as convertible terms. While the best of other players are held to be sufficiently honour-

ed with the title of favourite children, he has always stood confessed the FATHER of the stage, by a title so clear that as few during his life had the hardihood to contest it with him; so none, since his death, have been so shameless as to deny his supremacy. And now, far from being impaired by the lapse of two and thirty years which have passed over his grave, his fame seems to have acquired additional expansion and solidity; and time, which in every other instance has drawn the dusky veil of oblivion over the departed actor, seems to take delight in emblazoning the talents, and lending new lustre to the name of Garrick. The sentence of the author of the *Rosciad*

“ Garrick, take the chair,  
“ Nor leave it till you place an equal there,”

is in as perfect force on this day as on that in which it was pronounced: and of Cooke himself (the next born child of nature, and the only follower of Garrick, and common sense, on the stage) even his greatest panegyrists and admirers would be afraid to say, that he approximates to his great original.—Yet most of those who live at this time take the character of Garrick upon trust; and, aware of the vast mass and the imposing authority of the evidence upon which it is built, regard it as too sacred to be doubted, and yield it their implicit faith. But since it is fixed in the very nature of things that opinion grounded, not on our own senses, but on the testimony of others, must necessarily be vague and inconclusive; and that when, in matters merely human, the judgment is resigned to the direction of faith, it sees its object through a very dense medium; it is not improbable that the conceptions now entertained of Mr. Garrick may a little exceed those of his cotemporaries; and that, viewed through the expanse of time which has elapsed since his meridian hour of glory, and through the mist raised by the productions of marvel-mongers, idolatrous essayists, fanatical panegyrists, jest-book compilers, and conundrum writers, on the one hand, and of satirists, jibbers, and jesters, on the other, this extraordinary man, like the great luminary of the physical world, seen through a fog, may appear much more large than he did in the unclouded brightness of his own day. For our parts, being from infancy taught, by those whose opinions we were bound to reverence, to contemplate the character of this great man with admiration, we shall always reckon our being denied the advantage of seeing him, among the minor misfortunes of life: but

the conviction, that our admiration partook very largely of enthusiasm, has had the effect of alarming our reason, and putting it upon the task of separating, comparing and combining all the evidence we could find upon the subject; and the result is, that though we firmly believe Mr. Garrick to have possessed talents to perform more characters better than any man that has lived since Betterton, or perhaps before, we cannot think, as some do, but that his excellence, like every thing in this world, must have had its limits; and that to conceive what perfection man can attain in the art of acting, it is not absolutely necessary, as many assert, to have seen Mr. Garrick. On this subject we can now argue only by analogy; and a very assiduous investigation, protracted through years, impresses us with the belief that ample justice may be done to this great actor, even by diluting very considerably the highly rectified enthusiasm with which his acting has been described and is constantly contemplated.

In Mr. Garrick's private character the judicious and candid biographer has a difficult track to steer between the plethora of panegyric and the malice of satire, by which that worthy man may be traced through the publications of the last sixty years. In this article we are happy to say that it is as clear to us as the sun at noon-day that the balance was greatly in his favour.

Hitherto nothing has appeared having even a remote tendency to adjust those differences, or to represent this admirable man in the simple garb of candour and truth. From the nature of the circumstances, every attempt of the kind must now be subject to error—yet much may be done by resolute impartiality and patient investigation. With all its disadvantages, we will hazard the attempt; and we venture it with the less reluctance, because we believe it is the first of the kind that has been made.

Something of the sort is wanting, not only for the reasons already mentioned, but because the biographies of Mr. Garrick, which have hitherto appeared, are so overloaded with stage history, and so incumbered with extraneous matter, that few have courage to encounter the reading of them. Indeed his cotemporaries were so lost in admiration of his extraordinary qualities, that they seem to have forgotten what was due to probability; for fact itself, if it appear miraculous, ought to be hazarded with great caution, lest, seeming to outrage truth, it should shake the credibility of the historian. Having all the materials before us, without being subject



to the witchery which fascinated all who knew Garrick, we can at least observe the instruction of the great Roman orator and poet, and steer clear of the marvellous:

*Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,  
Solaque quæ possit facere et servare beatum.*

David Garrick was born in Hereford, while his father was on a recruiting party there, in a house nearly adjoining the New Inn, in Widemarsh-street, which was lately, if it be not still, occupied by a Dr. Campbell. He was baptized (according to the register in All-Saints Church) February 23, 1716.

When about ten years of age, he was placed under the care of Mr. Hunter, master of a grammar-school at Lichfield; and it appears, that even at this early age he had conceived a passion for theatrical representations. When but little more than eleven, he formed the project of getting a play acted by young gentlemen and ladies. The piece fixed on was, *The Recruiting Officer*, in which little Davy performed Sergeant Kite, and one of his sisters acted Lucy. The ease, vivacity, and humour of Kite obtained for our young hero, even at that early period, the most ardent applause.

A short time after this, David received an invitation from an uncle, who was a considerable wine merchant at Lisbon; the invitation he readily accepted: but his stay in that city was very short: he returned, in the following year, to Lichfield, and was sent once more to Mr. Hunter's school.

In 1735, Mr. Samuel Johnson, of Lichfield, afterwards so celebrated in literature, and who was one of David's earliest acquaintance, undertook the instruction of youth; and Garrick, who was then turned of eighteen, became one of his scholars. The study of the classics, however, had very few charms for his volatile mind; the stage almost wholly engrossed his thoughts: and he had by this time actually composed several scenes of three different comedies. After a trial of six months, Johnson grew weary of teaching the classics to half a dozen boys; and he and his favourite pupil, with a view of pushing themselves into public life, embarked together in the stage-coach for London, on the 2d of March, 1736.

On the 9th of March, Garrick was entered of the Hon. Society of Lincoln's-Inn, with a view to the bar. The study of the law, however, soon became irksome to a youth so disposed as we have described the subject of this memoir.

In 1737, his uncle left Lisbon, with an intention to settle in London; in which place he soon after fell sick and died. Before his death, his nephew David had ventured to insinuate to him, that he ought to make him some compensation, in his will, for the fruitless voyage which he had led him to make to Lisbon. The old gentleman seemed convinced of the propriety of the remark; for he left him 1000*l.*, while to the rest of his brother's children he left but 500*l.* each. With the interest of this money, David prudently placed himself under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Colson, an eminent mathematician at Rochester. Though we do not find that his progress in the mathematics was very extensive, yet we may well suppose that, by the precepts of Mr. Colson, a habit of thinking and reasoning must be inculcated, which would afterwards be very serviceable to him in his journey through life.

During the few months that Garrick remained under the care of Mr. Colson, his father died; and his mother did not survive her husband more than a twelvemonth. Towards the latter end of the year 1738, David entered into partnership with his eldest brother, Peter, a wine merchant in Durham-yard. This union, however, did not last long; the dispositions of the two brothers were as distant as possible from each other:—David was volatile and gay; Peter methodical and sedate; and in the beginning of 1740, by the interposition of friends, the partnership was amicably dissolved.

Mr. Garrick now felt himself at full liberty to indulge that *frenchant* for the stage, which was afterwards to immortalize his memory. Chetwood\* tells us, that "his facetious good humour "gained him entrance behind the scenes, two or three years in "Drury-lane, before he commenced actor;" and it is certain, that he produced there his first dramatic piece (*Lethe*) in 1740, for the benefit of Mr. Giffard. Determined, however, at once to try his fortune on the stage, he went down to Ipswich, assumed the name Lyddel, and performed in a strolling company there. The part in which he first appeared was Aboan, in *Oroonoko*; and the general approbation that he received during this excursion, very naturally encouraged him to pursue his plan in the metropolis.

With this view, Mr. Garrick tendered his services first to Mr. Fleetwood, of Drury-lane, and then to Mr. Rich, of Covent-garden; but, we are told, was rejected by both, as a mere country pretender!

\* General History of the Stage, p. 158.

He then applied to his friend Giffard, at that time manager of the Goodman's-Fields theatre; by whom he was heartily welcomed, and placed immediately on a salary of 5*l.* per week. His first appearance was on the 19th of October, 1741; the part, Richard the Third; and he burst on the town with such a blaze of excellence, as at once established his reputation on a basis which was ever after to remain unshaken.

It may be worth mentioning, that, though his success at Ipswich had been so great, and his partiality for the profession was so rooted, yet upon his first entrance on the stage of Goodman's-Fields, he was under so much embarrassment, that for some time he was unable to speak. Another distress also befel him: for his vehement exertions in the first two acts, had rendered him so hoarse, that he began to despair of being able to go through the part. This difficulty, however, was happily removed by a person accidentally behind the scenes, who drew from his pocket a Seville orange, and persuaded him to imbibe the juice of it; which afforded him such effectual relief as enabled him to sustain the part throughout, accompanied by the most rapturous applause.—Mr. Dryden Leach, afterwards a celebrated printer, was the gentleman to whom our hero was indebted for this seasonable prescription.

During this first season of his theatrical career, he performed, besides Richard, the characters of Aboan, Chamont, Clodio and Bayes; and also produced the pleasant farce of *The Lying Valet*. So prodigiously attractive were his performances, that the theatres at the west end of the town were absolutely deserted; and Goodman's-fields, from being merely the rendezvous of citizens and their wives, became the resort of all ranks and qualities. Mr. Pope was drawn, by the general rumour, from his retreat at Twickenham; and was so struck with Mr. Garrick's acting, that he said to lord Orrery, who sat next him,—“ *I am afraid the young man will be spoiled; for he will have no competitor.*”

At the close of the season, Mr. Garrick went over to Dublin; and there increased both his fame and fortune. The next year, 1742-3, he performed, under the management of Mr. Fleetwood, at Drury-lane; and the year after, 1743-4, at the same theatre. At the beginning of this season, he was involved in an unpleasant dispute with Macklin, who had joined with him in resisting the oppressions of the managers. It would lead us into too great a length for our limits to enter on the particulars of this quarrel, which soon ex-

tended itself into a paper war; but the reader, who is so inclined, may be fully satisfied by a reference to Mr. Kirkman's *Life of Charles Macklin*, vol. i. p. 277, or to Davies's *Life of Garrick*, 8vo. 1808, vol. i. p. 73.

At Drury-lane, Mr. Garrick continued till the year 1745, when he again passed over to Ireland; and continued there the whole season, joint partaker with Mr. Sheridan in the direction and profits of the theatre in Smock-alley. From thence he returned to England, and agreed for the season of 1746-7, with Mr. Rich, at Covent-garden. This was his last engagement as a hired actor: for at the close of that season, Mr. Fleetwood's patent for the management of Drury-lane being expired; and that gentleman having no inclination further to proceed with a business, by which (from his want of acquaintance with the proper conduct of it, or some other cause) he had considerably impaired his fortune; Mr. Garrick, in conjunction with Mr. Lacy, purchased the property of that theatre, together with a renovation of the patent; and in the winter of 1747, opened it with the greater part of Mr. Fleetwood's company, and with the additional strength of Mr. Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard, from Covent-garden.

Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Johnson, on this occasion, supplied his friend Garrick with a most admirable prologue, which was spoken by the manager: it is, however, too well known to require insertion here.

From this time Drury-lane theatre, which had been so fatal to many adventurers, became the source of wealth and independence to both Garrick and Lacy, who jointly exerted their several abilities in the management of the undertaking, with a degree of harmony which did credit to their understandings.

Mr. Garrick had not been quite two years a proprietor of the theatre before he offered his hand in marriage to a lady who then lived as a companion with the countess of Burlington, and who still survives as his widow. She was, we believe, by birth a German; her parents lived at Vienna, and she appeared on the stage there as a dancer. In the year 1746, she came to England, and performed one season at Drury-lane theatre, by the name of Madame EVA-MARIA VIOLETTI. The union between her and Mr. Garrick took place on the 22d of June, 1749; and, we believe, no marriage was ever attended with a more uniform state of happiness.

It has been just observed, that Mr. Garrick commenced his



management with an accession from Covent-garden, of Mr. Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard; his company also included Mr. Macklin, Mrs. Woffington, and Mrs. Clive. Notwithstanding his utmost attention to please his principal performers, he found it an impracticable task to satisfy every one. Barry began to complain that he was called upon to act at improper seasons, and on days when routs or assemblies prevented the fashionable world from attending the theatre. To this Garrick replied by desiring him to choose his own days. "Very well," said the other, "this is all that I can ask." But even that compliance had not the desired effect: Garrick's Hamlet still drew greater audiences than Barry's; but this was a misfortune which, of course, Garrick was not very eager to remove. Mrs. Cibber, too, made objections to the manager's conduct respecting those plays in which she acted principal parts. These discontents of Barry and Mrs. Cibber broke out at first into murmurs, and at last terminated in their revolt from Drury-lane to Covent-garden. Macklin likewise went over, as did Mrs. Woffington, who is said to have entertained expectations of being united in marriage to Mr. Garrick; and it was well known, that he had long enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with her.

With these deserters, strengthened by the valuable addition of Mr. Quin, Mr. Rich opened Covent-garden theatre. Garrick, not intimidated by the threatenings of this grand confederacy, took the field on the 5th of September, 1750, with an occasional prologue written and spoken by himself; which was answered by another delivered by Mr. Barry; and this again replied to by a humorous epilogue, written by Garrick, and admirably repeated by Mrs. Clive. These three pieces will be found in the poetry of this number.

The play of Romeo and Juliet had lain dormant for many years. This piece was now revived at both houses: at Drury-lane, with alterations by Mr. Garrick, who performed Romeo; Mr. Woodward playing Mercutio; and Miss Bellamy (whom Garrick instructed) Juliet. Against them were opposed at Covent-garden, Mr. Barry, Mr. Macklin, and Mrs. Cibber. In this cast of the play the preponderance was certainly on the side of Covent-garden, the character of Mercutio excepted; for which the saturnine countenance and hollow voice of Macklin rendered him unfit: while Woodward was every thing in it that critical taste could imagine—perhaps more.

even than the author, were he living, could have hoped for. Barry's superiority to Garrick was so universally allowed, that it gave rise to many epigrams and bon-mots. One night, while Garrick and Miss Bellamy were playing *Romeo and Juliet*, in the garden scene when Juliet exclaimed "*Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?*" a person in the pit exclaimed in answer to her,—"*Because Barry's gone to the other house.*"

Both houses began on the 1st of October, and continued to perform the same tragedy for twelve successive nights; when Mrs. Cibber's strength failing, Covent-garden gave up the contention; and its rival kept the field one night more; but no other advantage, we believe, was derived to either party from this contest, than the gratification of their own personal resentments: for, that the public were completely tired of it, was evident from the number of epigrams and other literary squibs that were produced on the occasion; of which we subjoin two:

*Romeo and Juliet!* What comes next?

*Romeo and Juliet!* still's the text.

*Romeo and Juliet!* Who'd not swear,

Of either house he'll ne'er go there?

The following turns very happily on an incidental expression in Mercutio's last speech:

"Well, what's to night?" says angry Ned,

As up from bed he rouses;—

"*ROMEO again!*"—and shakes his head:

"*A plague on both your houses.*"

(To be continued.)

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#### MEMOIRS OF JAMES QUIN.

[Continued from page 352.]

IN the season of 1742-3, Mr. Quin returned to his former master, Rich, at Covent-garden theatre, where he opposed Mr. Garrick at Drury-lane; it must be added, with very little success. But though the applauses the latter obtained from the public were not agreeable to Mr. Quin, yet we find that a scheme was proposed and agreed to, though not carried into execution, in the summer of 1743, for them to perform together, for their mutual benefit, a few nights at Lincoln's-inn Fields theatre. On the failure of this

plan, Mr. Quin went to Dublin, where he had the mortification to find the fame of Mr. Sheridan, then new to the stage, more adverse to him than even Mr. Garrick's had been in London. Instead of making a profitable bargain in Dublin, he found the managers of the theatres there entirely averse to admit him.

After staying there for some time he returned to London, without effecting the purpose of his journey, and in no good humour with the new performers. The season of 1743-4 Mr. Quin passed without any engagement; but in 1744-5 he was at Covent-garden again. The next year was devoted to repose, whether from indolence, or inability to obtain the terms he required from the managers, is not very apparent. Both may have united.

He had the next season, 1746-7, occasion to exert himself, being engaged at Covent-garden along with Mr. Garrick.

After one or two previous friendly meetings, they selected such characters as they intended to act, without being obliged to join in the same play. Some parts were to be acted alternately. Mr. Quin soon found that his competition with Mr. Garrick, whose reputation was hourly increasing, whilst his own was on the decline, would soon become ineffectual. His Richard the Third could scarce draw together a decent appearance of company in the boxes; and he was with some difficulty tolerated in the part, having been one night *much hissed*, when Mrs. Cibber played the Queen for the first time; but Garrick played the same character to crowded houses, and with very great applause.

At last these two great performers appeared together on the 14th of November 1746, in the tragedy of *The Fair Penitent*; and the shouts of applause when Horatio and Lothario met on the stage, in the second act, were so loud and so often repeated, before the audience permitted them to speak, that the combatants seemed to be disconcerted. It was observed, that Quin changed colour, and Garrick seemed to be embarrassed; and it must be owned, that these actors were never less masters of themselves than on the first night of the contest for preeminence. Quin was too proud to own his feelings on the occasion; but Garrick was heard to say "Faith, I believe Quin was as much frightened as myself."—The play was repeatedly acted, and with constant applause, to very brilliant audiences; nor is it to be wondered at; for besides the novelty of seeing the two rival actors in the same tragedy, Calista was admirably played by Mrs. Cibber.

It was in this season that Garrick produced *Miss in her Teens*; the success of which is said to have occasioned no small mortification to Quin. He, however, did not think it prudent to refuse Mr. Garrick's offer of performing it at his benefit.

It was this season also in which *The Suspicious Husband* appeared. The part of Mr. Strickland was offered to Quin, but he refused it; and in consequence it fell to the lot of Mr. Bridgewater, who obtained great reputation by his performance of it.

In the season of 1748-9, having lost his friend Thomson, he enlisted under the banners of Rich. On the 13th of January, 1749, Thomson's tragedy of *Coriolanus* was produced at Covent-garden, in which he played the principal character, and spoke lord Lyttleton's celebrated prologue, which had a very happy effect. The sympathizing audience said, that then indeed Mr. Quin was no actor; but that the tears he shed were those of real friendship and grief.

Just before the performance of *Coriolanus*, an honour had been conferred upon Quin, which he some years afterwards recollected with no small degree of exultation. On the 4th of January, *Cato* was performed at Leicester-house, by the direction of Frederic prince of Wales, in which his present majesty, prince Edward, princess Augusta, and princess Elizabeth, acted the parts of Portius, Juba, Marcia, and Lucia. The instruction of all the young performers, and the management of the rehearsals, were given to Quin; and it is said he was afterwards rewarded with a pension for his services. It was intended that Lady Jane Grey should have been represented by the same performers, and accordingly that play was revived at Covent-garden in December 1750; but for some reason the intended exhibition at Leicester-house did not take place. When Quin heard of the graceful manner in which the young king delivered his first speech in parliament, he cried out, "Ay, I taught the boy to speak!"—Prince Frederic, perhaps through the means of Thomson and Lyttleton, was a warm patron of Mr. Quin. The prince used generally to attend his benefit; and the plays he commanded, unless on some very particular occasions, were confined to Covent-garden theatre, in compliment to this actor. This attention in his royal highness was so beneficial to Quin, that his salary in the last year of his performance, it is said, was equal to £100*l*.

The season of 1750-1, opened with a very powerful company at



Covent-garden, consisting of Mr. Barry, Mr. Cibber, Mr. Quin, Mrs. Woffington, Mr. Macklin, &c. The combined strength of this assemblage of theatrical talents alarmed Mr. Garrick so much, that he wished to detach Quin from the party; but having had the command at Covent-garden, he did not wish to be controlled by Garrick; he therefore continued with his old master, Rich, upon higher terms than had ever been paid to any actor. His benefit was on the 18th of March, three days before the death of the prince of Wales, by whose command, though he was not present at the performance, Othello was acted: Othello, Mr. Barry; Iago, Mr. Quin; and Desdemona, Mrs. Cibber. It is recorded, that notwithstanding the novelty of this change in the performance, Othello being Quin's usual part, the house was by no means a crowded one; on the contrary, it was very thinly attended.

On the 20th of May, Mr. Quin performed Horatio, in the Fair Penitent, and with that character concluded his performance as an hired actor. He now put in execution his plan of retiring to Bath, but came to London the two succeeding years to perform Falstaff, for the benefit of his old friend Ryan. His last appearance on the stage was on the 19th of March, 1753, on which night the stage, pit, and boxes, were all at the advanced price of five shillings. The next year, finding himself disabled in some measure, by the loss of his teeth, from renewing his former assistance, he declined it altogether, saying in his usual blunt manner, "by G—d I will not whistle Falstaff for any body; but I hope the town will be kind to my friend Ryan; they cannot serve an honest man." He exerted himself, however, among his friends, and disposed of many tickets for him; and it is said, that to make up the loss of his annual performance, he presented his friend with no less a sum than 500*l*. By the retirement of Mr. Quin, the stage sustained a great loss; the characters in which he particularly excelled, falling into the hands of actors whose talents were very inadequate to their proper representation. In his principal tragic parts he was succeeded by Sparkes—but in the character of Falstaff he left no representative.

While Quin continued on the stage there was no great intimacy between him and Garrick; but when all competition for preeminence had ceased, it was no difficult matter for them to unite on terms of friendship. Both of them often spent their summers at Chatsworth, the seat of the duke of Devonshire; and one evening, being acci-

dentally left by themselves, Quin made the first overture towards a friendly intercourse, by inquiring after the health of Mrs. Garrick, for which he expressed a very solicitous regard. After this his visits at Hampton were frequent. The last time was in the summer of 1765, just after Garrick's return from Italy. While at this seat of hospitality, an eruption came out on his hand, which the faculty seemed to fear would turn to a mortification, and occasion the loss of it. This circumstance affected his spirits, and is supposed to have thrown him into a hypochondria, which brought on a fever that carried him off, when he was out of all danger on account of his hand. During his illness he had taken such quantities of bark, as to occasion an incessant drought, which nothing could assuage; and being willing to live as long as he could without pain, he discontinued taking any medicines for upwards of a week before his death; and during this period was in good spirits. The day before he died he drank a bottle of claret; and being sensible of his approaching end, he said, "He could wish that the last tragic scene were over, though he was in hopes he should be able to go through it with becoming dignity." In this hope he was not disappointed: he died at his house at Bath on Tuesday, January 21, 1766, about four o'clock in the morning; and on the Friday following was interred in the Abbey church at Bath, where a monument to his memory was erected, with lines by Mr. Garrick.

Mr. Quin's language in conversation was nervous; and his *bon mots* had a force in them that secured their remembrance long after their transitory effusion: but it must be owned, that many of them are very coarse, and offensive to decency.

In declamation, Mr. Quin was most excellent. It is said he recited with particular energy and judgment, but was unqualified for the striking and vigorous characters of tragedy. He gave true force and dignity to sentiment, by a well-regulated tone of voice, judicious elocution, and easy deportment. His chief characters were Brutus; Cato; the Duke, in *Measure for Measure*; and Falstaff. However, the exigencies of the theatre frequently imposed upon him King Lear, Richard, Macbeth, Othello, Young Bevil, Chamont, &c.

At the age of sixty, he performed Chamont in a long grisly, half-powdered wig, hanging low down on each side of the breast, and down the back; a heavy scarlet coat and waistcoat, trimmed with broad gold lace; black velvet breeches; black silk neckcloth; black stockings; a pair of square-toed shoes, with an old-fashioned

pair of stone buckles; a pair of stiff high-topped white gloves; and a broad old scoloped hat.—Were the youthful Chamont to appear on the stage in such a dress now, the tragedy would cause more laughter than tears.

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## MISCELLANY.

### FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

To our correspondent K, we can only say in the words of Othello,

I greet thy *thoughts*,  
Not with vain thanks, but with acceptance bounteous.

### THE WORD OBLIGE.

THOUGH this word, derived from the Latin, is manifestly pronounced *obledge*, the white and red rose were not more inveterate than are the *obligers* and *obleeg'd*. I have seen a man have the company driven away by the discordant sound of *oblige*. Its own incompleteness affords food for the two factions, no word having more opposite meanings than this—alternately signifying gratitude and the avowal of employed force: but the articles of reconciliation are easily adjusted: in the latter sense let *oblige* be ever the pronunciation, and let the former ever be *obleeg'd*.

How improper would it be to chastise a blind horse for stumbling; yet we suffer ourselves to be angered by the vitious actions of a scoundrel, when from his nature he is incapable of good.

Bon mots, jest books, &c. have the same effect on us in common life as the use of spices has on our palate. All wit becomes insipid if it be not very highly seasoned.

There is a certain class of men who lead you into errors, and then take a merit in extricating you. They remind me of an eccentric being who used to conceal some valuable; and after setting the whole house on the fruitless search, would sneak to his hiding place,—exultingly produce the treasure, extolling his own sagacity, and cursing the indolence of the whole family.

The folly of marrying a beautiful woman, and the old objection *beauty soon fades*, have been food for many a hungry philosopher. They do not reflect that our appetites, desires and enjoyments are as transitory as the beauty they decry.

Whether it arises from nature, education, or conceit, I know not; but the association of ideas of the goaded ox and the butchered one I eat, invariably causes a loathing of all animal food.

Were we to examine our actions minutely, we would find vanity the impulse by which we are constantly actuated.

Pope's lady who never "drinks her tea without a stratagem," is completely outdone by a modern hero:

"With wondrous manœuvres he combs his hair,  
"Nor kills a louse but by a *ruse de guerre*."

What different ideas different readings of the same piece give rise to! Before Mr. Cooke's arrival, Shakspeare had been read with indifference, his beauties unadmired because unknown: we now see, in our *very papers*, parodies of the immortal bard; a beau in the stable yard ordering the ostler "to saddle *bay* Surry for a "trot to-day;"—and a belle flirt away without paying any attention to your request, because "she's busy—she's not in the vein."

Novels, without exception, are said to be injurious to the morals of our youth: a knowledge of human nature will show the fallacy of the idea. Ordinary minds, if not diverted by external objects, naturally revert to evil; a constant round of visiting and novels become minor considerations.

After your words "a man may have an excuse for writing, but "can have none for publishing nonsense," you will wonder what excuse I can make for troubling *you*:—I candidly confess, it is the wish of having something of mine preserved *from the decay of time*, and my fame transmitted (though by the same means as the murderer of Philip) to posterity.

K.



## MICHAEL ANGELO MERIGI.

MICHAEL ANGELO MERIGI, commonly called Michael Angelo Da Caravaggio, was born at Caravaggio, a village in the Milanese, in the year 1569, and made himself famous by a manner in painting extremely strong, true, and of great effect, of which himself was the author. He painted every thing he did, in a room where the light descended from on high. He followed his models so exactly, that he imitated their defects as well as their beauties, having no other idea than the effect of nature present before him. He used to say, that those pictures which were not drawn after nature, were but as so many rags; and the figures of which they were composed, but as painted cards.

His manner, being new, was followed by several painters of his time, and among others by Manfredi, and Valentine a Frenchman. We must own the likeness of this manner is very surprising, and has a very powerful effect on the most judicious spectators. He drew after him almost the whole school of the Caracci.

For not to name Guercino, who never left his manner, Guido and Dominichino were tempted to follow it; but it was accompanied with such an ill *goût* of design; and the choice of his lights being the same in all sorts of subjects, they fell off from it in a very little time. His pieces are to be met with in most of the cabinets in Europe. There are several of them at Rome, and Naples, and one picture of his drawing is in the Dominicans' church at Antwerp, which Rubens used to call his master.

He often brought himself into danger, by his contemptuous discourse of his contemporaries, especially of Gioseppino, whom he made a jest of publicly. One day the dispute between them ran so high, that Michael Angelo drew his sword and killed a young man called Tomasino, who being Gioseppino's friend, would have parted them. Upon this Michael Angelo was obliged to fly to the Marquis Justiniani, to protect him. While he lived in his house, he drew the picture of St. Thomas's unbelief, and a Cupid, two admirable pieces for the Marquis.

Justiniani obtained his pardon, and reproved him severely for being so outrageous; but Michael Angelo, as soon as he was at liberty, being unable to command his passions, went to Gioseppino, and challenged him. The latter answered, he was a knight, and

would not draw his sword against his inferior. Caravaggio, nettled at this answer, hastened to Malta, performed his vows and exercises, and received the order of knighthood as a serving brother. While he was there, he drew the decollation of John the Baptist, for the great church, and the portrait of the grand master de Vignacourt, which is in the king's cabinet.

Being dignified with the order of Malta, he returned to Rome, intending to force Gioseppino to fight him, but happily for his competitor, a fever put an end to the dangerous dispute, with his life, in the year 1609.

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#### TATE WILKINSON.

Wilkinson was often in a repartee. An actor in the York theatre, of very slender talent, but possessing a great portion of conceit, having played all the first rate characters in very small companies, expostulated with Mr. Wilkinson for giving him some very inferior parts, and used language very unbecoming; he frequently made use of the phrase, "I who am at the top of the ladder,"—"Well," replied Wilkinson, "I'll end your troubles: for if you are at the top of the ladder, I'll turn you off directly."

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#### DIRGE

On the much-lamented death of a beautiful girl.

Larded all with sweet flowers,  
She bewept to the grave did go  
With true love showers.....*Shakspeare.*

Underneath this ebon shade,  
Mark'd by a rudely sculptured stone,  
The lov'd Maria low is laid;  
Soft be the turf she rests upon!

These flowers that grow around her tomb  
All bear a paler hue,  
And die almost before they bloom;  
Their sympathy so true.

The pensive powers who haunt the grove  
Shall here their vigils keep;  
Chaunt their wild requiems o'er my love,  
And soothe her lasting sleep.

Pity for her shall touch the string,  
And breathe the softest sigh;  
And here her holy strains shall sing  
Of heaven-taught melody.

For she was sweet as opening buds,  
Mild as the hours of May;  
Bright as the sunbeam on the floods,  
And constant as the day.

Friend of my youth! for thee my tears  
Spontaneously shall flow;  
And memory, through a length of years,  
Shall nurse the sighs of wo.

For thee, when autumn glows around,  
An offering sad I'll pay,  
Deck with fresh wreaths thy hallow'd ground,  
And mourn the fatal day.

On thee, amid life's varied part,  
My tenderest thoughts shall rest;  
Bemoan'd, while love can warm my heart,  
Or friendship cheer my breast.

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FROM a very pretty poem called "HOPE," the production of a respectable clergyman of the name of Bowles, the following elegant description of Fancy is transcribed. That reader, who thinks of this specimen of the author's genius as favourably as we do, will be likely to praise the whole poem.

His fine eye flashing an unwonted fire,  
Then Fancy o'er the glade delighted went;  
He struck at times a small and silver lyre,  
Or gaz'd upon the rolling element;  
Sometimes he took his mirror which did show  
The various landscape lovelier than the life;  
More beamy bright the vivid tints did glow,  
And so well mingled was the color's strife,  
That the fond heart, the beauteous shades once seen,  
Would sigh for such retreats, for vales and woods so green.

Gay was his aspect; and his airy vest,  
As loose it flow'd, such colors did display  
As paint the clouds reposing in the west,  
Or the moist rainbow's radiant arch inlay;

And now he tripp'd, like fairy of the wood,  
 And seem'd with dancing spirits to rejoice;  
 And now he hung his head in pensive mood—  
 Meantime, O Hope, he listen'd to thy voice;  
 And whilst of joy and youth it cheerly sung,  
 Lightly he touch'd his harp, and o'er the valley sprung.

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FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

I MUST confess, Mr. Editor, that, toiling so hard to gain the applause of posterity, I should be very proud of your assistance. Let me say, sir, that I have looked over the editorial department of your *Mirror* with inexpressible anxiety for a compliment, and, to my utter confusion and despondency, have found none. I look upon these editorial sugar-plums as what every writer is intitled to obtain as a matter of right. You have already been acquainted with my determination to write for posterity only. Now would it not be a neighbourly office in you to apprise them of the fact?—I give you this fair warning that, unless a compliment is speedily manufactured, I will resort to an action at law for damages. Other writers are told, that they transcend all Greek and Roman fame; while the poor solitary Simon is suffered to keep the harmless tenor of his way. If you knew how comfortable I should feel in perusing an editorial paragraph of this description, you could not have the conscience to refuse me that pleasure:—"We now present to our readers the profound and erudite lucubrations of Simon Shadow, Esq. We are fearful of injuring the modesty of this writer, when we undertake to declare, that for splendor of imagination, profundity of research, chastity of style, nervous, bold and impassionate language, grace and novelty of diction, this writer has been exceeded by no one, ancient or modern."

Now, as the alternative proffered is either a compliment, or an action at common law, you must see that I am disposed to an amicable adjustment; that I have been kind beyond example in giving your opinion by proxy. I beseech you to have an eye to the press, and not to incorporate the above compliment with this communication, as this would jeopardize my reputation for modesty.

I will now, sir, state the cause of my present mortification. So sure was I of a compliment that, previous to my perusal of the last number, I invited a friend of mine home, for the purpose of reading the many handsome things you had said. He accepted of my



invitation; and with an air of self-importance, I brought the Censor from my library, and deposited the book in his hands. I was musing on what attitude of countenance I ought to assume when he should read aloud the precious passage that was to promulgate my glory. After deep contemplation, I concluded that a composure of aspect indicating a familiarity with applause would become my dignity the better. I watched his eye as it coursed along your pages, with the most painful solicitude and impatience, for the sequel: and you may judge of my surprise and chagrin, when he quietly laid the book upon the table and told me that you had not said one word to my advantage. I declare I have been so ashamed ever since, that it requires an uncommon effort for me to look a gentleman full in the face and inquire the time of day.

In requital for this anticipated compliment, suffer me to introduce to your acquaintance my much esteemed cousin, JAMES SHADOW, Esquire.—Without entering into an analysis of his life, so gratifying to an idle curiosity, it is sufficient to say, that he was one of that class who believe that natural genius is every thing—study and industry nothing. This opinion he formed from the amazing difficulty with which he was able to comprehend any subject whatever. While at school, he was perfectly familiar to all the various gradations of honour; and he passed through the various stages with a fortitude becoming his high character. In the first place, he was the *birch* scholar. This powerful stimulant had been often administered, and with so much fidelity and emphasis, that my cousin could seldom sit down without making wry faces. After his apprenticeship to the birch had expired, he was next put to the discipline of the ferule. And here I beg leave to correct an error into which some of his relations have fallen—that his *hard hand* was evidence of his early industry. Sir, it was no such thing: the firm and solid texture of his hand resulted from the rigid scholastic discipline he underwent. The preceptor of the academy then made philosophic experiments upon my cousin's ears. All these, however, served only to increase his horror of his book; and I have heard him declare, that he never since can look upon a volume without the most painful sensations: he calls it his old persecutor, and avers that his exterior postern, his hands, his ears, all rise in rebellion at once.

At length he was declared to be the only proper candidate to receive the honours of the academy. A large cap was therefore made

of white paper, to which tassels of the same substance were appended, whose height extended nearly to the ceiling. This was fitted exactly to the form of his head; and never did my cousin appear to such distinguished advantage. He looked around upon his fellows with an air of conscious and placid superiority; shut up his book with the most dignified contempt. Methinks, sir, I can see his calm philosophic front erected above his fellows in majestic pre-eminence; the wind rustling the tassels of his dignity as if anxious to proclaim to the world the glory of the Shadows. My cousin was therefore returned to his parents, with this marked and distinguished encomium, as a boy whose mind could receive no advantage from instruction. He then, for the first time in his life, set his brains to work to solve this mysterious problem: how it should happen that he had received the first honours of the academy when it was a fact admitted by others, and boasted of by himself, that of all the scholars he indisputably knew the least. After this problem had undergone many considerations, he came to this sage conclusion—that bounteous nature had done for him what hard study had done for others. So well was my cousin convinced of the justice of this solution, that he preserves the memorial of his academic honours to the present day pendent from the ceiling in the hall of his ancestors; but somewhat profaned by the flies who have not had the same reverence for this badge of early genius. As I am a thorough convert to the faith of my cousin James, I beg leave to state one anecdote of his subsequent life in illustration of its justice.—He was, sir, desperately enamoured with a female beauty, who bears the poetical name of MIRA. All his tender looks, passionate exclamations, ecstatic apostrophes, went for nothing; she stedfastly refused the honour of his hand. James at length heard, fortunately for his peace, that love made a man a poet. He found in the family record preserved in the bible, that he had now arrived at a time of life to which law affixes discretion; he was therefore, in legal phraseology, a man competent to transact his own business. That he was a lover also, he knew to his sorrow. He was, therefore, a lover and a man; and, according to that sage apophthegm, a poet. He was resolved to try his hand accordingly at a sonnet; and let it be said to his honour, that in six weeks he produced the following delicious morceau which, as a specimen of beautiful simplicity, stands unrivalled:

Cupid! Cupid!  
 Why so stupid?  
 Come and see  
 A votary.  
 Here I stay  
 Night and day;  
 Weep and cry,  
 Almost die.  
 Mira's air  
 Makes me stare.  
 A form so bright  
 Charms my sight.  
 She scorns the tie,  
 I must die.

Pardon me, sir, if on the present occasion, and notwithstanding all my apathy, I am compelled to shed tears on the perusal of a sonnet abounding in such exquisite simplicity and pathos. It commences with a declaration of his passion in a beautiful apostrophe to Cupid, who, as my cousin said he was credibly informed, was a sort of god in such matters; it tells Mira that she was the cause of his grief; that her beauty, to which a compliment is paid, had fascinated his eyes; and ends with a declaration that she had rejected his passion; and that his death would be the consequence. All this is comprised in the space of fourteen lines!—Notwithstanding this pathetic appeal, the little ingrate resisted his addresses; and my cousin at last found consolation in the thought, that if the most tender love and the most fervid poetry united, could not take her heart by storm, it was not worth the pains or hazard of a conquest. I produce, sir, this incident as a proof of the principle, that nature can do for a great genius more than study is capable of doing,—consequently that the honours of the academy were well conferred on my worthy cousin, James Shadow.

SIMON SHADOW.

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CURIOUS COMBAT.

Two gentlemen of high birth, the one a Spaniard and the other a German, having rendered Maximilian II. many great services, they each for recompense demanded his natural daughter, Helena Scharfequinn, in marriage. The prince, who entertained equal regard for them both, could not give either the preference; and after much delay, he told them, that from the claims they both had to his

attention, he could not give his assent to either of them marrying his daughter, and they must decide it by their own power and address; but as he did not wish to risk the loss of either, or both, by suffering them to fight with offensive weapons, he had ordered a large bag to be brought; and he, who was successful enough to put his rival in it, should obtain his daughter.

This strange combat between the two gentlemen was in presence of the whole imperial court, and lasted near an hour: at length the Spaniard yielded; and the German, when he had him in the bag, took him on his back and placed him at the emperor's feet; and on the following day he married the beautiful Helena.

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THE following are the pieces alluded to in the biography of Mr. Garrick, given in this number of the Mirror.

#### PROLOGUE,

Written by Mr. Garrick, and spoken by him on opening Drury-lane theatre, in 1750.

As heroes, states, and kingdoms, rise and fall,  
 So—(with the mighty to compare the small)  
 Through int'rest, whim, or, if you please, through fate,  
 We feel commotions in our mimic state;  
 The sock and buskin fly from stage to stage;  
 A year's alliance is with us—an age!  
 And where's the wonder? All surprise must cease,  
 When we reflect, how int'rest, or caprice,  
 Makes real kings break *articles of peace*.  
 Strengthen'd with new allies, our foes prepare;  
 "Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war."  
 To shake our souls, the papers of the day  
 Drew forth the adverse power in dread array;  
 A power might strike the boldest with dismay:  
 Yet, fearless still, we take the field with spirit,  
 Arm'd cap-à-pie in self-sufficient merit.  
 Our ladies too, with souls and tongues untam'd,  
 Fire up like Britons when the battle's nam'd:  
 Each female heart pants for the glorious strife,  
 From \*Hamlet's mother, to the †cobler's wife.  
 Some few there are, whom paltry passions guide,  
 Desert each day, and fly from side to side:  
 Others, like Swiss, love fighting as their trade,  
 For beat, or beating,—they must all be paid.

\* Mrs. Pritchard.

† Mrs. Clive.



Sacred to Shakspeare was this spot design'd,  
 To pierce the heart, and humanize the mind.  
 But if an empty house, the actor's curse,  
 Shows us our Lears and Hamlets lose their force;  
 Unwilling we must change the nobler scene,  
 And, in our turn, present you Harlequin;  
 Quit poets, and set carpenters to work,  
 Show gaudy scenes, or mount the vaulting Turk.  
 For, though we actors, one and all agree  
 Boldly to struggle for our——vanity;  
 If want comes on, importance must retreat;  
 Our first, great ruling passion, is—to eat.  
 To keep the field, all methods we'll pursue;  
 The conflict glorious! for we fight for you:  
 And, should we fail to gain the wish'd applause,  
 At least we're vanquish'd in a noble cause.

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 PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. Barry, at Covent-garden theatre, in 1760.

WHEN vice, or folly, overruns a state,  
 Weak politicians lay the blame on fate.  
 When rulers useful subjects cease to prize,  
 And damn for arts that caus'd themselves to rise:  
 When jealousies and fears possess the throne,  
 And kings allow no merit—but their own,  
 Can it be strange that men for flight prepare,  
 And strive to raise a colony elsewhere?  
 This custom has prevail'd in ev'ry age,  
 And has been sometimes practis'd on the stage;  
 For *entre nous*—these managers of merit,  
 Who fearless arm—and take the field with spirit,  
 Have curb'd us monarchs with their haughty mien,  
 And Herod\*—have out-Heroded,—within.

[*Pointing to the green-room.*]

O! they can torture twenty thousand ways!  
 Make bouncing †Bajazet retreat from †Bayes!  
 The ladies§ too, with every power to charm,  
 Whose face, and fire, an anchorite might warm,  
 Have felt the fury of the tyrant's arm.

By selfish arts expell'd our ancient seat,  
 In search of candor—and in search of *meat*,  
 We, from your favour, hope for this retreat.

\* Mr. Quin. † Both Quin and Barry. ‡ Garrick. § Mrs. Cibber, &c.

If Shakspeare's passion, or if Jonson's art,  
 Can fire the fancy, or can warm the heart,  
 That task be ours.—But if you damn their scenes,  
 And heroes must give way to harlequins,  
 We, too, can have recourse to mime and dance:  
 Nay, there, I think, we have the better chance:  
 And, should the town grow weary of the mute,  
 Why—we'll produce—a child upon the flute.\*  
 But, be the fool as 'twill, 'tis you that treat!  
 Long have they feasted—permit us now to eat.

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EPILOGUE,

Written by Mr. Garriel, and spoken by Mrs. Clive, at Drury-lane theatre, in 1750.

*[Enters hastily, as if speaking to one who would oppose her.]*

I'LL do't! by heaven I will!—pray get you gone:  
 What! all these janglings, and I not make one!  
 Was ever woman offer'd so much wrong?  
 These creatures here would have me hold my tongue!  
 I'm so provok'd—I hope you will excuse me:  
 I must be heard—and beg you won't refuse me.  
 While our mock heroes, not so wise as rash,  
 With indignation hold the vengeful lash,  
 And at each other throw alternate squibs,  
 Compos'd of little wit—and some few fibs;  
 I, Catherine Clive, come here t' attack 'em all,  
 And aim alike at little and at tall.  
 But first, ere with the buskin'd chiefs I brave it,  
 A story is at hand, and you shall have it.

Once on a time two boys were throwing dirt,  
 A gentle youth was one, and one was somewhat pert;  
 Each to his master with his tale retreated,  
 Who gravely heard their different parts repeated;  
 How Tom was rude, and Jack, poor lad, ill-treated.  
 The master paus'd—to be unjust was loth,  
 Call'd for a rod, and fairly whipt them both.  
 In the same master's place, lo! here I stand,  
 And for each culprit hold the lash in hand.  
 First, for our own—Oh, 'tis a pretty youth!  
 But out of fifty lies I'll sift some truth.  
 'Tis true, he's of a choleric disposition,  
 And fiery parts make up his composition.

\* A child, said to be but four years of age, had been introduced on the stage of Drury-lane theatre, to play a tune on that instrument.

How have I seen him rave when things miscarry'd!  
Indeed he's grown *much tamer* since he married.  
If he succeeds, what joys his fancy strike!  
And then he GETS—to which he's no dislike.  
Faults he has many—but I know no crimes:  
Yes; he has one—he contradicts sometimes:  
And when he falls into his frantic fit,  
He blusters so, it makes e'en ME submit.  
So much for him—the other youth comes next,  
Who shows by what he says, poor soul, he's vexed.  
He tells you tales how cruelly THIS treats us,  
To make you think the little monster beats us.  
Would I have whin'd in melancholy phrase,  
How “bouncing Bajazet retreats from Bayes!”  
I, who am woman! would have stood the fray:  
At least, not snivell'd thus, and run away!  
Should any manager lift arm at me,  
I have a tyrant arm as well as he!——  
In fact, there has some little bouncing been,  
But who the bouncer was—inquire within.  
No matter who,—I now proclaim a peace,  
And hope henceforth hostilities will cease:  
No more shall either rack his brains to tease ye,  
But let the contest be—who most shall please ye.

## DRAMATIC CENSOR.

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### DE MONFORT,

A TRAGEDY, BY JOANNA BAILLIE.

[Continued from page 127, Vol. III.]

At meeting, the lady Jane has a conversation with De Monfort, in which his feelings and opinions respecting this wonderful sister are so exquisitely portrayed that it would be unpardonable in us not to transcribe them.

*Jane.* Beneath this veil no beauty shrouded is,  
That now, or pain, or pleasure can bestow.  
Within the friendly cover of its shade  
I only wish unknown, again to see  
One who, alas! is heedless of my pain.

*De Mon.* Yes, it is ever thus. Undo that veil,  
And give thy countenance to the cheerful light.  
Men, now all soft, and female beauty scorn,  
And mock the gentle cares which aim to please.  
It is most damnable! undo thy veil,  
And think of him no more.

*Jane.* I know it well, even to a proverb grown,  
Is lovers' faith, and I had borne such slight:  
But he, who has, alas! forsaken me,  
Was the companion of my early days,  
My cradle's mate, mine infant playfellow.  
Within our opening minds, with riper years,  
The love of praise, and gen'rous virtue sprung:  
Through varied life our pride, our joys, were one;  
At the same tale we wept:—he is my brother.

*De Mon.* And he forsook thee?—No, I dare not curse him:  
My heart upbraids me with a crime like his.

*Jane.* Ah: do not thus distress a feeling heart.  
All sisters are not to the soul intwin'd  
With equal bands; thine has not watch'd for thee,  
Weep'd for thee, cheer'd thee, shar'd thy weal and woe,  
As I have done for him.

*De Mon.* [*Eagerly.*] Ha! has she not?  
By Heaven! the sum of all thy kindly deeds



Were but as chaff, pois'd 'gainst the massy gold,  
 Compar'd to that which I do owe her love.  
 Oh pardon me! I meant not to offend—  
 I am too warm—But she, of whom I speak,  
 Is the dear sister of my earliest love;  
 In noble, virtuous worth, to none a second:  
 And though behind those sable folds were hid  
 As fair a face as ever woman own'd,  
 Still would I say she is as fair as thee.  
 How oft amidst the beauty-blazing throng,  
 I've proudly to th' inquiring stranger told  
 Her name and lineage! yet, within her house,  
 The virgin mother of an orphan race  
 Her dying parents left, this noble woman  
 Did, like a Roman matron, proudly sit,  
 Despising all the blandishments of love:  
 Whilst many a youth his hopeless love conceal'd,  
 Or, humbly distant, woo'd her like a queen.  
 Forgive, I pray you! O forgive this boasting!  
 In faith! I mean you no discourtesy.

*Jane.* [*Off her guard, in a soft, natural tone of voice.*] Oh no! nor do me any.

*De Mon.* What voice speaks now? Withdraw—withdraw this shade!

For if thy face bears semblance to thy voice,  
 I'll fall, and worship thee!—Pray! pray undo!

Here another incident, which arises naturally, displays the judgment as well as genius of the poet, and her wonderful art in advancing the progress of her fable. While De Monfort is in the act of forcing her veil from her face he is opposed:—and by whom, but by Rezenvelt, who thus throws oil upon the fire of his hatred and indignation.

*Rez.* Stand off! no hand shall lift this sacred veil.

*De Mon.* What, dost thou think De Monfort fall'n so low,  
 That there may live a man beneath heav'n's roof  
 Who dares to say he shall not?

*Rez.* He lives, who dares to say——

*Jane.* [*Throwing back her veil, very much alarmed, and rushing between them.*] Forbear! forbear!

[REZENVELT, very much struck, steps back respectfully, and makes her a very low bow. DE MONFORT stands for a while motionless, gazing upon her, till she, looking expressively to him, extends her arms, and he, rushing into them, bursts into tears. FREBERG seems very much pleased. The company then gather about them, and the scene closes.]

The scene changes to De Monfort's apartment, discovers lady Jane expostulating with her brother. She probes him to the quick; deprecates the indulgence of his secret feelings, and presses him to a discovery with a tenderness so eloquent and a reasoning so dignified, that not even a faint conception can be formed of it, but by reading the words themselves. But as the transcription of them here would overload these observations beyond the allowance usually given to a concise analysis, we must refer our readers to the play itself, and proceed to those parts which are more immediately necessary to the concatenation of the plot and the development of the main character. In their conference Jane exhibits perfection so much more than human, that we fear it can exist only in a poet's fancy: finding him seriously reluctant to disclose his secret, she expresses her willingness to remain ignorant of it,—

Then secret let it be!!

In his agitation, however, he lets fall an expression which harrows up her soul, and rekindles her desire to know the whole.—When he exclaims

Oh, that cursed villain!

He will not let me be the man I would,

she falls on her knees in an agony of grief; on which he can no longer resist her importunities, and agrees to reveal to her his whole heart. Upon her suggesting the likelihood of its being an affair of love.

*De Mon.* A lover, say'st thou?

No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate;  
Which thus hath driv'n me forth from kindred peace,  
From social pleasure, from my native home,  
To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth,  
Avoiding all men, cursing, and accurs'd.

*Jane.* De Monfort, this is fiendlike, frightful, terrible!  
What being, by th' Almighty Father form'd,  
Of flesh and blood, created even as thou,  
Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake,  
Who art thyself his fellow?

Unknot thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands:  
Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom, mates  
To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother!  
Strive bravely with it;—drive it from thy breast:  
'Tis the degrader of a noble heart;  
Curse it, and bid it part.

*De Mon.* It will not part. *[His hand on his breast.]*  
 I've lodg'd it here too long;  
 With my first cares I felt its rankling touch,  
 I loath'd him when a boy.

*Jane.* Who didst thou say?

*De Mon.* Oh! that detested Rezenvelt!  
 E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps  
 Of hostile breed, instinctively reverse,  
 Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his other pledge  
 And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd  
 From youth to man's estate, his narrow art,  
 And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd  
 In the affected carelessness of mirth,  
 Still more detestable and odious grew.  
 There is no living being on this earth  
 Who can conceive the malice of his soul,  
 With all his gay and damned merriment,  
 To those, by fortune, or by merit plac'd  
 Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,  
 He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,  
 As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,  
 Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,  
 I could endure it: even as we bear  
 Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,  
 I could endure it. But when honours came,  
 And wealth, and new got titles, fed his pride;  
 Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,  
 And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses on him;  
 Oh! then I could no longer suffer it!  
 It drove me frantic—What, what would I give!  
 What would I give to crush the bloated toad,  
 So raukly do I loath him!

*Jane.* And would thy hatred crush the very man  
 Who gave to thee that life, he might have ta'en?  
 That life, which thou so rashly didst expose  
 To aim at his? Oh, this is horrible!

*De Mon.* Ha! Thou hast heard it, then? From all the world,  
 But most of all, from thee, I thought it hid.

*Jane.* I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd  
 Upon the instant, to return to thee.  
 Didst thou receive my letter?

*De Mon.* I did! I did! 'twas that which drove me hither.  
 I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

*Jane.* Alas! that, tempted by a sister's tears,  
 I ever left thy house! these few past months,  
 These absent months, have brought us all this woe.

Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.  
 And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.  
 You dar'd him to the field;—both bravely fought;—  
 He, more adroit, disarm'd you; courteously  
 Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,  
 You did refuse to use against him more;  
 And then, as says report, you parted friends.

*De Mon.* When he disarm'd this curs'd, this worthless hand  
 Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd  
 From dev'lish pride, which now derives a bliss  
 In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected  
 With the vile favour of his poor forbearance;  
 Whilst he securely sits with gibing brow  
 And basely bates me, like a muzzled cur  
 Who cannot turn again —  
 Until that day, till that accursed day,  
 I knew not half the torment of this hell,  
 Which burns within my breast. Heaven's lightning blast him!

*Jane.* O this is horrible! Forbear, forbear!  
 Lest Heaven's vengeance light upon thy head,  
 For this most impious wish.

*De Mon.* Then let it light.  
 Torments more fell than I have felt already  
 It cannot send. To be annihilated,  
 To be what all men shrink from—to be dust, be nothing,  
 Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am.

*Jane.* Oh! wouldst thou kill me with these dreadful words?

*De Mon.* [*Raising his arms to Heaven.*] Let me but once upon  
 his ruin look,  
 Then close mine eyes for ever!

Here then we have the whole amount of his provocation to the deadly hatred of De Monfort unfolded to us. And “the very head and front of Rezenvelt's offending” turns out to be no greater than

Envious gibing malice, poorly veiled  
 In the affected carelessness of mirth.

Yet this, trifling as it may appear, is too much for human frailty to endure with unruffled temper. Doctor Johnson somewhere remarks that there can be no stronger symptom of a bad heart than to be at once merry and malicious.—But we have already said enough upon this part of the subject, and will drop it.

The expostulations of lady Jane and count Freberg at length get a kind of extorted consent from De Monfort to meet Rezenvelt on



friendly terms, and to interchange kindnesses with him. The latter advances with undisguised frankness, and offers his hand saying, "let us be friends, and think of this no more;" to which the former with dignity replies,

No, my lord.

I will not offer you an hand of concord,  
And poorly hide the motives which constrain me.  
I would, that, not alone these present friends,  
But every soul in Amberg were assembled,  
That I, before them all, might here declare  
I owe my spared life to your forbearance.  
[*Holding out his hands.*] Take this from one, who boasts no feeling warmth,  
But never will deceive.

On hearing this, all are happy: lady Jane is in transports of joy, and Rezenvelt, overcome, runs to De Monfort with open arms to embrace him.

*Rez.* Away with hands! I'll have thee to my breast.  
Thou art, upon my faith, a noble spirit!

Here the fiend of rancor at once resumes his dominion over the heart of De Monfort; he shrinks back from Rezenvelt, and, in a cold and lofty tone, replies:

*De Mon.* Nay, if you please, I am not so prepar'd—  
My nature is of temperature too cold—  
I pray you pardon me. [*Jane's countenance changes.*]  
But take this hand, the token of respect;  
The token of a will inclin'd to concord;  
The token of a mind that bears within  
A sense impressive of the debt it owes you;  
And cursed be its power, unnerv'd its strength,  
If e'er again it shall be lifted up  
To do you any harm.

*Rez.* Well, be it so, De Monfort, I'm contented;  
I'll take thy hand, since I can have no more.  
[*Carelessly.*] I take of worthy men whate'er they give.  
Their heart I gladly take; if not, their hand:  
If that too is withheld, a courteous word,  
Or the civility of placid looks;  
And, if e'en these are too great favours deem'd,  
'Faith, I can sit me down contentedly  
With plain and homely greeting, or, God save ye!

At this De Monfort starts away from him several paces, and bursting with vengeful, gloomy hatred, exclaims to himself,

By the good light, he makes a jest of it.

All harmony is now at an end; and things have gone so far that one would imagine the hatred and fury of De Monfort could not admit of further augmentation. One thing only could inflame him more, and that is brought to bear upon him. A suspicion of Rezenvelt's being beloved by and engaged to marry his sister is suggested—circumstances accidentally occur to strengthen it, and in his frenzy he draws his sword and attempts to kill Rezenvelt, but is disarmed by him. Then hearing that Rezenvelt is going on a visit to a neighbouring mansion, he waylays and murders him. He is soon taken and brought to a neighbouring convent, where, being locked up in a chamber with the mangled body of the deceased, he in despair dashes his head against the wall, and soon after dies, the victim of his own ungovernable passion.

From this admirable tragedy may be deduced the following moral truths.

First, that if the vitious passions be not curbed in infancy and “crushed in the shell,” they will rule us in manhood with despotic power, blast all happiness for life, and end in calamity, perhaps in an ignominious death.

Secondly, that, be the number or magnitude of a man's virtues what they may, they constitute no security against any one vice if it happens to be a ruling passion.

And lastly, that it is very dangerous and extremely unamiable to indulge in the affectation of wit and humour at the expense of another's feelings.

If gibing be not a certain indication of a bad heart, it has all the bad effects of cold-blooded malignity. Exclusive of the many tragical catastrophes to which it has led, it impairs charity—the social comforts wither at its approach, and the hatred it never fails to excite is not the less cordial and inveterate for being concealed; at the same time there is something in itself so mean and so degrading to him who practises it, that a man of pride, however he may suffer, scorns to acknowledge the power of such a person or such a thing to hurt his feelings. “I have been young, and now am old,” yet never saw I a man of that description who ever had a single friend, or was without a host of enemies.

DRAMATICUS.—No. IV.

[Continued from p. 306, Vol. II.]

AN unreasonable chasm has been interposed between my former communication and the present one, by business and a most culpable spirit of procrastination. I regret the circumstance, and offer the reader all due apology.

I proceed to submit a few remarks on the pretended madness of Hamlet, which the critics admit to have been assumed to no purpose. They add, that the objects of the poet could not only have been as completely attained without this contrivance\*—but that its obvious tendency was to embarrass Hamlet in the prosecution of his designs.

These are undoubtedly strong objections. And their cogency is very considerably enhanced by the reflection, that they are absolutely extorted from those who, in the true spirit of *commentatorism* (will the reader pardon the coinage of a new word?) appear to have regarded it as an imperious duty to extenuate every defect, and to magnify and elevate every beauty of the object of their labours. For it requires but a superficial acquaintance with the productions of editorial critics in general, to be satisfied that this is the course they almost invariably pursue. It is not difficult to account satisfactorily for this procedure. They are sometimes heated by an overweening zeal—and at others, blinded by prejudice. And it not unfrequently happens that they are influenced by much less pardonable motives—by those of a sinister and disingenuous description. By blazoning forth the transcendent merits of the author, to the elucidation of whose works they devote their time and attention, they hope to increase their own fame, as well as those profits, the hopes whereof impel them to the undertaking. Instances have occurred, and not very rarely, wherein all the three motives have conspired together to warp the judgment, and to produce an incorrect verdict.

The objections to the madness of Hamlet, which I have quoted, would have applied with perfect justice, and been absolutely unanswerable, even had he preserved an uniform tenor of conduct—

\* “Of the feigned madness of Hamlet, there appears no adequate cause; “for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of “sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much “rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.” JOHNSON.

had he not most inconsistently and unaccountably given reason to doubt the reality of his insanity. But they derive vast additional force from the reflection, that in most parts of his conduct he absolutely laid aside the mask he had assumed.

During the continuance of his pretended madness, his intercourse is principally confined to his friends Horatio and Marcellus—the queen—the players—Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—and to Polonius and Ophelia. Let us consider how he conducted himself towards these different personages individually.

To Horatio and Marcellus he has given reason to suspect his intention of simulating madness. As they of course were in his secret, it was not necessary to make any attempt to deceive them. His conversation with them is therefore lucid and perfectly rational, except in one instance, after the dismissal of the mock players—

*Ham.* Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me), with two Provencial roses on my rayed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

*Hor.* Half a share.

*Ham.* A whole one, I.

*For thou dost know, O Damon dear,  
This realm dismantled was  
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here  
A very, very—peacock.*

*Hor.* You might have rhym'd.

*Ham.* O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound—  
Didst perceive?

*Hor.* Very well, my lord.

*Ham.* Upon the talk of the poisoning?—

*Hor.* I did very well note him.

*Ham.* Ah, ah!—Come, some music; come, the recorders—

For if the king like not the comedy,  
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

In the rant here quoted, there is as much appearance of insanity or of a most preposterous and misplaced levity, as is to be found in any part of the tragedy. That this rhapsody does not comport with the actual situation of Hamlet, is self-evident. All his suspicions and doubts of the murder of his father, and the guilt of his uncle, were just converted into certainty. His convictions were strong and immovable. He was in company with the only confidential friend he appears to have had; to whom he might naturally enough



be expected to unbosom himself, and whom it would be proper to consult on the steps requisite to be pursued in such an awful crisis of his fate. But instead of adopting this dignified course, he concludes his discourse with the sagacious observation

For if the king likes not the comedy,  
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

The king believed Hamlet to be really mad: and he very *wisely* sent for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to endeavour to discover from him the cause of his madness! It required no small portion of insanity to suppose that a man actually in that state could know his situation, or, if he did, that he would discover the cause of his misfortune. A leading feature of madness is a confidence of our own superior abilities, and a belief of the imbecility of others. However, dismissing this consideration, let us examine the conduct of Hamlet in his interview with these courtiers.

He had previously taken very considerable pains to impress the world with a persuasion of his madness, but appears to have abandoned his scheme, precisely at a time when, and in company of those persons with whom, it was highly essential to continue to support the character he had assumed. In some parts of his discourse with the courtiers, there is, it is true, a slight tincture of absence or flightiness; but nothing that could in any degree deserve to be styled madness:—

*Ham.* What news?

*Ros.* None, my lord; but that the world's grown honest.

*Ham.* Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

*Guil.* Prison, my lord!

*Ham.* Denmark's a prison.

*Ros.* Then is the world one.

*Ham.* A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

*Ros.* We think not so, my lord.

*Ham.* Why, then 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so; to me it is a prison.

*Ros.* Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

*Ham.* O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

*Guil.* Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

*Ham.* A dream itself is but a shadow.

*Ros.* Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

*Ham.* Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs, and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

This is very far remote from madness, and merely denotes a perturbed mind. In another part of his conversation with these courtiers, Hamlet launches out into the most profound and sublime reflections.

*Ham.* I have of late (but, wherefore, I know not), lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form, and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!—And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me,—nor woman neither; though, by your smiling, you seem to say so.

If Hamlet takes no pains to appear deranged, Rosencrantz and his associate equally lose sight of their object. They make no effort to ascertain what is the cause of the distraction, or melancholy of the prince. They were therefore summoned to the scene of action to very little purpose.

In his interview with the players, Hamlet likewise makes not the slightest pretence to derangement. Every sentence he addresses to them is perfectly lucid and correct; and displays a consummate knowledge of the subject on which he treats. He descants on the duties of their profession as elaborately, and inculcates on them as sound instruction, as if he had taken out his degrees in a theatrical university.

*Ham.* Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lieve the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious perriwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inex-

plicable dumb shows, and noise: I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'er-doing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.—Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this, overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one, must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players, that I have seen play,—and heard others praise, and that highly,—not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of christians, nor the gait of christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted, and bellow'd, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

He moreover recites, *memoriter*, a long and intricate passage from an old play, on the catastrophe of Priam when he fell into the hands of the bloody and inexorable Pyrrhus. In the whole, therefore, of his proceedings with the players there appears not the most distant semblance of madness.

This deportment must be allowed to have been in direct hostility with the plan he had formed, and to have betrayed extreme inconsistency.

But the case of the queen is still more striking and forcible than that of all the rest of the dramatis personæ. As Hamlet's principal object must have been to deceive the king, it was highly essential for that purpose to keep the queen in ignorance of the real state of his mind, and of his views. But in the whole of the extended dialogue with her, every pretence of madness is discarded. Every line teems with wholesome, sound advice, perfectly suited to her situation. Neither Sherlock, nor Blair, nor Massillon, could have argued with more intelligence, acuteness, or conviction. Indeed, he not only does not affect madness, but he most explicitly disclaims all pretence to it, and most earnestly labours to convince his mother of the perfect sanity of his mind.

*Ham. Ecstasy!*

My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,  
And makes as healthful music: it is not madness  
That I have utter'd: bring me to the test,  
And I the matter will re-word; which madness

Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,  
 Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
 That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks;—  
 It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;  
 Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,  
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;  
 Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;  
 And do not spread the compost on the weeds,  
 To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue:  
 For, in the fatness of these pursy times,  
 Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg;  
 Yea, curb, and woo, for leave to do him good.

This was most completely tearing off the mask, and totally abandoning an awkward contrivance, by no means calculated, under the very best management, to answer the purpose he had in view. It was morally certain, that she would directly reveal the communication to the king, whose guilty conscience would suggest means of freeing himself from the danger of his situation.

But Hamlet's imprudence carries him a step further. He has, in some manner that does not appear in the tragedy, discovered the plot laid for his destruction in England, and reveals this knowledge to the queen, thus inexpressibly increasing the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and still further awakening the jealousy of his enemies.

*Ham.* I must to England; you know that?

*Queen.* Alack, I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

*Ham.* There's letters seal'd: and my two school-fellows,—  
 Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd,—  
 They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,  
 And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;  
 For 'tis the sport to have the engineer  
 Hoist with his own petar: and it shall go hard,  
 But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
 And blow them at the moon:—O, 'tis most sweet,  
 When in one line two crafts directly meet!

It is not easy to define exactly the character of mind displayed in the treatment of Polonius by Hamlet. Pure madness it certainly is not. There is, it must be confessed, occasionally a tincture of a certain something, that wears the semblance of derangement. But the most predominant features are, a paltry attempt at wit, and a rude and indelicate kind of sarcasm, from which the age and rank



of Polonius ought to have protected him. Had it been intended to impose on him an idea that the prince was really insane, the course pursued was very far indeed from bearing strong marks of sagacity.

*Ham.* My lord, you play'd once i' the university, you say?

*Pol.* That I did, my lord: and was accounted a good actor.

*Ham.* And what did you enact?

*Pol.* I did enact Julius Cæsar: I was killed in the *capitol*;—*Brutus* kill'd me.

*Ham.* It was a *brute* part of him to kill so *capital* a calf there.—Be the players ready?

This, to some readers, may appear very witty. But by every correct mind it must be regarded as a most miserable attempt at punning, combined with a brutal outrage upon the feelings of a man incapable of resenting the injury.

Again on another occasion:

*Pol.* What do you read, my lord?

*Ham.* Words, words, words!

*Pol.* What is the matter, my lord?

*Ham.* Between who?

*Pol.* I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

*Ham.* Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here, that old men have gray beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams: all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for yourself, 'sir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

This procedure was not, as I have already stated, calculated to carry on the deception which Hamlet had begun. But even admitting for a moment that it had been, how can it be reconciled to a good heart—a clear head—or to the excellent character lavished on Hamlet by the critics generally? He was, by his elevated rank, in a great measure, if not altogether, protected from the resentment or vengeance of those whom he injured or insulted. Was it then decent—was it decorous—nay, was it not dishonourable, for a person thus intrenched by “the sanctity of high dignity,” to offer outrage to the feelings of any man, and more particularly of one in the wane of life, whose age, as far as we can infer from the drama, was his only offence? This circumstance, of itself, would have secured him kindness and attention from any magnanimous mind, far from exposing him to the keen and biting jeers and sarcasms

which he uniformly experienced whenever he encountered a prince who is preposterously styled

"The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
"The glass of fashion, and the mould of form."

I come now to the conduct of Hamlet to Ophelia. To do justice to the subject, it is necessary to bear constantly in mind the relative situation of the parties. The one was a prince, the other a lady of high rank, of the most unblemished reputation, and of such exquisite sensibility that she was easily driven to madness. She loved him to distraction; and, after she had been hurried to a premature grave, probably by his conduct, he professed to have most ardently loved her:

"Forty thousand brothers  
"Could not, with all their quantity of love,  
"Make up my sum."

There is more appearance of madness in his deportment towards her, than can be extracted from all the rest of the tragedy together. It is, however, more visible in her description of his conduct than in any thing that passes before the audience:

*Oph.* My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,  
Lord Hamlet,—with his doublet all unbrac'd;  
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,  
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ancle;  
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;  
And with a look, so piteous in purport,  
As if he had been loosed out of hell,  
To speak of horrors,—he comes before me.

*Pol.* Mad for thy love?

*Oph.* My lord, I do not know;  
But, truly, I do fear it.

*Pol.* What said he?

*Oph.* He took me by the wrist, and held me hard:  
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;  
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,  
He falls to such perusal of my face,  
As he would draw it. Long staid he so;  
At last a little shaking of mine arm,  
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,  
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,  
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,  
And end his being: that done, he lets me go,  
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,

He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;  
For out o'doors he went, without their helps,  
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

In this detail, there appears a complete simulation of madness, and nothing that detracts from the respect due to the lady, or that commits either the head or the heart of Hamlet.

His conversation with her, as it takes place on the stage, is broken, disjointed, and irregular; occasionally, and not unfrequently, disgraced by the grossest indecency. The dialogue between them, previous to the commencement of the mock tragedy, contains some allusions as licentious perhaps as are to be found in any drama written by Farquhar, Congreve, or Wycherley. It is better adapted to the tenant of a stew, addressing one of the votaries of the Cyprian deity, than to a prince addressing a court belle.

What would be the consequence, were any man even in the middle walks of life, at present, to address a female of his own rank, in a large circle, in such an indecent style? The good sense of the gentlemen present would rise up in judgment against him, and he would inevitably be expelled the company with disgrace—perhaps with chastisement.

For the obscene allusions and expressions used by Hamlet, I must refer the reader to the drama itself, as originally penned. I dare not quote them here. But of the rudeness and want of feeling manifested in his treatment of Ophelia, I submit a few specimens.

*Ham.* Ha, ha! are you honest?

*Oph.* My lord?

*Ham.* Are you fair?

*Oph.* What means your lordship?

*Ham.* That, if you be honest, and fair, you should admit no discourse to your beauty.

*Oph.* Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

*Ham.* Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into its likeness: this was some time a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.

Again—

*Ham.* Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better, my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them

in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in:—What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us: Go thy ways to a nunnery.—Where's your father?

*Oph.* At home, my lord.

*Ham.* Let the doors be shut upon him; that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewel.

Once more—

*Ham.* I have heard of your paintings too well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance: Go to; I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are.

To conclude—

*Ham.* We shall know by this fellow; the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

*Oph.* Will he tell us what this show meant?

*Ham.* Ay, or any show that you'll show him: be not you ashamed to show, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

To extenuate this scandalous conduct, it will be said, as it has been already, that this deportment was proper and necessary to support the character of madness assumed by Hamlet. This is an error. There were numberless modes of effecting that object; all of them at least as likely to succeed, and as rational, as the very exceptionable one adopted. And were this the only practicable scheme, a single spark of decency or delicacy would have forbade a recurrence to it. I lay but little stress on the circumstance, that the futility of this extenuation is unanswerably proved by the abandonment of all pretences to madness in so many cases as I have cited.

To diminish the disgust which the coarseness and obscenity of Hamlet's discourse to Ophelia must naturally excite, we are gravely informed, that various forms of expression which modern delicacy or fastidiousness proscribes, were "in days of yore," regarded as innocent and unexceptionable; and that it is, therefore, injustice in the extreme to try ancient writing by modern rules. To a certain extent, this plea is just. But I am fully persuaded, that there never was a period in civilized society, in which it was regarded as decorous or proper for a gentleman to use obscenity or rudeness in his discourse with a lady.



These observations, however they may differ from the opinions of others, have at least the merit of sincerity to recommend them. I assuredly believe in the truth of what I advance. I have in vain essayed to change my view of the tragedy of Hamlet. For I really despise the affectation of singularity as much as a servile acquiescence in the decision of others. My motto on this point, as on all others, has ever been

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

If I am in error, I shall rejoice to have it pointed out; and if convinced, I shall cheerfully abandon my present opinions without hesitation.

P. S. To judge correctly of this critique, it is necessary to examine an authentic copy of Hamlet. The common editions are all mutilated.

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KING LEAR,—AND Mr. COOKE IN THAT CHARACTER.

[Continued from page 396, Vol. III.]

KENT has always been a favourite with the public. His bluntness, integrity, courage, fidelity, and generous adherence to his old master in his adversity, are qualities which, portrayed as they are with the boldest pencil that man ever held, would of themselves sufficiently recommend him to esteem; but the rich vein of humour that pervades the greater part of his speeches, give a certain attractiveness to the character that secures a steady attention to his conduct, recommends all he says and does to the fancy, and transmits it to the memory with a force which renders the impression of it indelible. As for those shivering critics, who have so far cased up their feelings and common sense in the flint of impenetrable system as to reject all mixture of comic with tragic scenes, and who, in the name of Aristotle, denounce the flights of nature which immortalize Shakspeare, we can afford them no further notice than the charitable prayer of Holofernes, "God comfort thy capacity!"—But to those who, like us, admire an occasional mixture of the kind, and own its impressiveness without considering why, we will remark, that it must be agreeable to every uncorrupted taste, because it is founded in nature. "The web of our life," says Shakspeare, "is of a mingled yarn: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not,"—and we may add, that

melancholy would destroy our energies, or lose its usefulness by continuity, if mirth did not occasionally relieve it by contrast, and, by suspending its operation, renovate its powers and effects. As the character of Kent has been sneered at by some of those inveterate system-mongers for ill-timed drollery, this is as proper an occasion as any that can occur for saying a few words on the subject of tragicomedy. Let it be understood however, that it is not to them, but to those who may be led into error by their pedantry, that this is addressed. To remove, by reasoning, a prejudice nourished by vanity in defiance of nature, is rarely found to be practicable: to appear judicious, learned, and Aristotelian, is too great a temptation to be resisted;—to acknowledge ourselves in error is an effort to which, unfortunately, few are equal. If, therefore, we were disposed to waste time in making an experiment upon incorrigible system-mongers, we should resort, as to the least hopeless method of all others, to the expedient of the swine-driver, who having to make his herd pass over a bridge in a certain direction, sagaciously made as if he would drive them the opposite way. On the other hand, the followers of those system-mongers may be compared to sheep, who leap with wonderful determination and agility over the fence of their penfold, if only one lead the way; and scorn to go over any other part than that which their leader has taken, even though a gap lie open for them at a foot distance.

Let those who, yielding to the impulse of nature and everyday observation, relish that “mingled yarn” of the stage to which we refer, comfort themselves, and be confirmed in their taste, with the following assurances.

First, that the public has for ages decided in its favour cannot be denied:—Now between the unlettered critics of nature, who compose what we here call the public, and the few whose judgments have been shaped by profound reading and inquiry and by experience and long observation, little just criticism is ever found. He who, like Sterne’s notable critic, judges by a stop-watch, and has packed up in his brains a heap of trash of unities, dactyls, spondees, and rules, and measures, to encounter the simple operations of nature upon his feelings and common sense, and who stupidly pondering upon an unimportant blemish, suffers a host of beauties to pass by unobserved, is almost as much inferior to the natural critic of the two shilling gallery, as he is to the most luminous of Shakspeare’s commentators. These last, as well as the former, have decided in

favour of tragicomedy.—And what the opinion of the most exalted and enlightened writers of modern times is we could demonstrate by a multitude of instances—but, for brevity, will confine ourselves to two. And first we will give that of Doctor Johnson.

“Shakspeare’s plays,” says the Doctor, “are not, in the rigorous and critical sense, either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind; exhibiting the *real state of sublunary nature*, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which at the same time the reveller is hastening to his wine and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

“Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and casualties, the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men, and some their absurdities; some the momentous vicissitudes of life, and some the lighter occurrences; some the terrors of distress, and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation, known by the names of tragedy and comedy; compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied, that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

“Shakspeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind, but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow, and sometimes levity and laughter.

“That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed; but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature.\* The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition; and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life, by

\* *Quere*—What is meant by criticism. In the drama, which is, or ought to be, a representation of nature, can that be just criticism which does not take its rules and laws from nature? *Ed. M. T.*

“ showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low cooperate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.\*

“ It is objected, that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression, and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incident, wants at least the power to move, which constitutes the perfection of dramatic poetry. This reasoning is so specious, that it is received as true, even by those who in daily experience know it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much, but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise, that melancholy is often not pleasing, and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another; that different auditors have different habitudes; and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.”

Such is the decision of the great rock of criticism, upon whose judgment the wisest and the most learned think themselves safe in building their opinions:—but since there are some who may object to it as founded in the prejudice of an ardent mind—(for prejudice has, for some years past, been the fashionable repulse to an unanswerable argument)—we beg leave to lay before our readers the sentiments of Doctor Beattie, whose sober, unimpassioned and unprejudiced judgment will receive that credit which may be refused to the other, though the higher authority.

“ If all actors,” says Doctor Beattie, speaking of Garrick, “ were like this one, I do not think it would be possible for a person of sensibility to outlive the representation of Hamlet, Lear, or Macbeth: which, by the by, seems to suggest a reason for that mixture of comedy and tragedy of which our great poet was so fond, and which the Frenchified critics think such an intolerable outrage both against nature and decency. Against nature it is no outrage at all: the inferior officers of a court know little of what passes among kings and statesmen, and may be very merry where their superiors are very sad; and if so, the porter’s soliloquy in Macbeth may be a very just imitation of na-

\* Dryden’s “Spanish Friar” is a most admirable exemplification of this truth, and one of the very best specimens of tragicomic invention. E.D. M. T.



“ture. And I can never accuse of indecency the man who, by the  
“introduction of a little unexpected merriment, saves me from a  
“disordered head, or a broken heart. If Shakspeare knew his own  
“powers, he must have seen the necessity of tempering his tragic  
“rage by a mixture of comic ridicule. Other play-wrights must  
“conduct their approaches to the human heart with the utmost  
“circumspection; a single false step makes them lose a great deal  
“of ground: but Shakspeare made his way to it at once, and could  
“make his audience burst their sides this moment and their hearts  
“the next.”

Kent's blunt introduction and recommendation of himself to the king therefore, when it receives tolerable support from the performer, generally affords great delight, and pleasingly relaxes the mind and feelings for the reception of the afflicting sequel. His treatment of the gentleman-usher, though laughable, is highly characteristic, and very judiciously managed. With the art peculiar to himself, Shakspeare has made even the short dialogue between Lear and Kent in disguise, though apparently extraneous, help the mind forward in its comprehension of the main design, and by anticipation let in a gleam of light upon the dreary situation to which the latter has reduced himself; commencing even there that excitement of our feelings, which by degrees increases upon us with the progress of the play, till it rends the heart to pieces in the catastrophe.

*Lear.* What art thou?

*Kent.* A very honest fellow—and as poor as the king.

*Lear.* If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king, thou art poor enough.

In reviewing the productions of Shakspeare, it is not alone the genius which astonishes and so irresistibly calls forth our passions, but the felicity, the judgment and the exactness with which he first creates, and then applies minute occurrences to the accomplishment of the main object of his plan;—it is not the grand masterly outline, superior though it always is to those of other men, but the delicate strokes of the pencil, the lines scarcely perceptible to common eyes (except in their general effect), with which he fills up and finishes his work, which raise him above all other poets in our estimation.—Incidents separately so inconsiderable as to evade particular notice, conjunctures apparently trivial, expressions of the most simple kind, dubious indefinite

hemistichs, mutilated exclamations, remote interjectional hints, springing one from the other in order so natural and unforced, that they look like the familiar every-day occurrences and table-talk of our lives, give such an imposing air of verisimilitude to the progression of the story, that the mind is thrown off its guard, and so completely, though insensibly, prepared for the poet's purpose, that the boldest fictions (fictions so bold in the extreme, as few dramatic poets have ever dared to hazard, and none but himself have attempted with success) appear not only probable, but are anticipated as consequentially necessary and naturally inevitable. In the hands of any other poet the wickedness, the cruelty, and unnatural ingratitude of Goneril and Regan would appear incredible; but Shakspeare, without unfolding an atom more than conduces to the perfection of his scheme, so skilfully contrives to prepare us, that we cannot help foreboding some evil from them before their base intentions have the means of practical effect. For scarcely has Lear left them in the very first scene, when, even on the very spot where he "gave them all," and while yet the sound of their adulation tingles in the ear, they begin to conspire against him, and obscurely disclose their malevolent purposes. The suspicions awakened by this are artfully kept alive through the whole of the first act, and in the last of it are so heightened as to excite serious alarm for the fate of the poor old king, and to make us expect something like that which follows in the second. They who will read the fourth scene with the attention it deserves, and bring to it a disposition and a taste worthy of such a treat, will own that we are justified in our praise and admiration of the address with which it is contrived to produce the effect adverted to.

Lear, with his knights and attendants, returning from an excursion to the palace of his daughter Goneril, calls to the steward of the palace then crossing the court-yard, but who passes on without attending to him. This remote indication of his daughter's feelings is scarcely noticed by the old king till one of his knights hints to him, that a great abatement has been manifested not only in the kindness of Goneril and the duke her husband, but of ceremony and respect in all the domestics. Lear takes the hint, and owns that he had remarked something of a similar nature:

"Thou but remember'st me of mine own conception; I have perceived  
"a most faint neglect of late, which I have rather blamed as my own jealous  
"curiosity, than as a pretence and purpose of unkindness."

We have already taken occasion to observe, that in the delineation of any of the great master passions, Shakspeare takes care never to omit any of its adjunctive qualities.—Excessive sensibility is the passion exhibited in King Lear; variability and irresoluteness of conduct are its constant associates; together with a quick susceptibility of resentment, and a delicate apprehension of doing wrong, struggling with each other.—Though he has perceived a falling off in his daughter's kindness, the good old king, exquisitely sensible of the turpitude of such conduct, but equally sensible of the moral duties, and alive to paternal tenderness, endeavours to reject the suspicion, and fathers it on his own jealousy. Thus too Shakspeare, on the same principles, makes Hamlet pause from time to time and doubt the justice of revenge, even after he has had evidence which, upon any other but a mind like his, would have produced conviction of his father's having been murdered, and consequent decisive action.

The spirit that I have seen  
May be a devil: and the devil hath power  
To assume a pleasing shape; yea and perhaps,  
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,  
(As he is very potent with such spirits)  
Abuses me to damn me;—I'll have ground  
More relative than this.

Exactly in the spirit of the same complexional feeling, Lear says, though he has seen enough to convince him, "I will look further into it." While this minute and accurate investigation of the passion of sensibility shows how deeply versed Shakspeare was in the philosophy of the human mind, the most subtle strokes by which the feelings can be assailed are intermingled throughout, and mark his boundless dominion over the heart; of this nature we consider the pathetic reference to the excellence of Cordelia, so artfully introduced as a contrast to the baseness of her sisters, and as an additional excitement to the unhappy sensations of Lear. Not only the conception of introducing it at all, but the natural manner of bringing it about, are truly Shakspeare's own. Any other poet would have made the knight who starts it take occasion from mentioning the misconduct of Goneril, immediately to expatiate on the virtues of Cordelia. But, for Shakspeare, that would be what is commonly called "*lugging it in by the head and shoulders.*" To be worthy of his genius, it must flow from a source much nearer to the fountain-

head of nature; accordingly, the poor old monarch after having confessed his own observation of Goneril's misbehaviour, as if anxious to decline a topic that is painful to him, says he will look further into it, and then turns abruptly to another subject; one indeed which, childish though it seems, is in his present condition of some importance to him.

*Lear.* But where's my fool?—I have not seen him these two days.

*Knight.* Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

*Lear.* No more of that!—I have noted it well.

This is indeed, as Garrick once speaking of our poet happily expressed it, “to dip the pen in the human heart:” this is truly to draw the materials of poetry from unsophisticated man, and its inspiration from nature herself. What are all the pomp and circumstance of tragedy—its chalices and poniards, its coffins, dirges, and processions, compared with the pathetic appeal at once to the heart and understanding contained in these few words which, though short and simple, are calculated to convey more meaning, to excite deeper interest, and to extort more tears than a volume of the smooth, measured *verbiage*, the canting recitative, of which other tragedies are composed.

As persons of extreme sensibility are extravagant in their friendships and affections, so they are inordinately violent in their anger, and carry their resentment to an outrageous excess. Lear, being received with ingratitude and insolence by his daughter, is hurried away by the torrent of his rage and impatience, and gives vent to his feelings in terrific curses. In nothing that we know of does Shakspeare show his knowledge of our nature more than in the different proportions of indignation he assigns to Lear on the different provocations he receives from his two daughters. The amount of Goneril's first trespass upon his rights, though considerably less than that which follows from Regan, excites infinitely more poignant misery and more violent expressions of rage. It is the first direct violation of his feelings, and therefore stabs him more deeply;—he has yet no other offence to compare it with,—it is unexpected,—it is incredible,—and, bursting like a thunderclap upon him, rives him to the very soul, and so deprives him of all sober reflection that, falling on his knees, he invokes the bitterest curses to fall upon her. Here the caprice of disappointed expectation, one of the foibles of sensibility, shows itself. He curses Goneril, and



leaving her, goes to Regan; informs her, that her sister had abated him of half his train: but so far from receiving consolation, he is told to go back again to Goneril, and after having staid with her for a month, and dismissed half his train (fifty followers), to come to her and she will receive him, till which she peremptorily refuses him admittance, informing him at the same time that even then he must reduce his train to twenty-five. This in some sort reconciles him to the lesser offence of Goneril, whom he had cursed, and who arrives at Regan's while they are speaking. He reasons upon it thus:

Those wicked creatures yet do look well favour'd  
When others are more wicked: not being the worst  
Stands in some rank of praise,—

and then turning to Goneril, he continues:

I'll go with thee;  
Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,  
And thou art twice her love.

Though the witchery of Shakspeare's fable, the novelty of his incidents and the charms of his language united, never fail to delight, they do not half enjoy and still less do they comprehend the vast extent of his powers who peruse his plays without keeping his leading object constantly in view. It is for this reason we have, in the course of this analysis of what we consider one of the noblest productions of the human mind, so repeatedly pressed upon the consideration of the reader, the obvious purpose of the poet.— Having seen how artfully and yet naturally the sensibility of Lear has been wrought up to that crisis, beyond which it cannot be urged without danger of distraction, let us consider in detail the words and actions by which its effects upon him are gradually unfolded.

Perceiving the injurious looks with which he is regarded by his daughter Goneril, whose turn it is to entertain him for a month, he exercises his customary parental authority, and rebukes her—

How now, daughter, what makes that frontlet on?

To this she answers with a complaint of the conduct of his attendants, which she calls riotous, and, in words that savour of menace, ascribes it to his encouragement. Overwhelmed by insolence so unexpected, and almost breathless with astonishment, he exclaims

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"Are you our daughter?"—

Then, as if rendered, by the shock, dubious of his own identity, he turns to those about him, and asks

Does any here know me? Why, this is not Lear:  
Does Lear walk thus?—speak thus?—where are his eyes?—  
Either his notion weakens, or his discernings  
Are lethargy'd.——Ha! waking!—'Tis not so.—  
Who is it that can tell me who I am?—Lear's shadow?  
I would learn that; for by the marks  
Of sovereignty, of knowledge, and of reason,  
I should be false persuaded I had daughters——  
Your name, fair gentlewoman?

What pen, what imagination can do justice to this wonderful effusion?—What a complicated picture of internal agony, confusion and horror is here presented to the mind! All Lear's functions are for the moment suspended—his sorrow in astonishment—his rage in doubt and incredulity—his sensations reach above complaint—and his wrongs are so far beyond all likelihood, that he feels disposed rather to disbelieve his own existence, or his having children, than to give credit to the baseness of Goneril, till it is forced upon his belief by her cruel reply: then, for the first time, his feelings break forth in a succession of the most pathetic complaints, frightful execrations, poignant invectives against his own folly, and furious denunciations against his daughter. It may, without fear of controversy, be affirmed, that a passage cannot be found in any poet, dramatic or other, in which passion is wrought up with equal probability or effect, to so stupendous a height—not one in which, without bursting the brain, the feelings are urged so close to the confines of madness, or in which every heart is so irresistibly summoned to sympathize with suffering humanity.

*Lear.* Darkness and devils!——  
Saddle my horses; call my train together——  
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee;  
Yet have I left a daughter!——

——Woe, that too late repents,

O sir, are you come? [ALBANY, *Goneril's* husband, enters.  
Is it your will?—Speak, sir!——Prepare my horses.  
Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,  
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child,  
Than the sea monster.

*Albany.* Pray, sir, be patient.



*Lear.* Detested kite! thou liest:

[*to Goneril.*

My train are men of choice and rarest parts,  
That all particulars of duty know;  
And in the most exact regard support  
The worships of their name.—O most small fault!  
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show,  
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature  
From the fixt place, drew from my heart all love  
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear!

Beat at this gate that let thy folly in, [*striking his head.*  
And thy dear judgment out!—Go, go, my people.

*Albany.* My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant  
Of what hath mov'd you.

*Lear.* It may be so my lord.

Hear, nature! hear; [*kneels.*] dear goddess, hear a father!  
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend  
To make this creature fruitful!  
Into her womb convey sterility;  
Dry up in her the organs of increase,  
That from her derogate body never spring  
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,  
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,  
And be a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!  
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;  
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;  
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits  
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel  
How sharper than a serpent's tongue it is  
To have a thankless child.—Away, away!

[*Exit.*

*Albany.* Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

*Goneril.* Never afflict yourself to know the cause;  
But let his disposition have that scope  
That dotage gives it.

*Re-enter LEAR.*

Here we have fresh occasion to notice the unparalleled judgment of Shakspeare in the distribution of his parts. The short departure of Lear gives an opportunity to Albany to avow his innocence and heighten the guilt of Goneril, by showing that he has no participation in it: besides it displays a natural trait in the feelings of the old king, who goes away—but cannot find it in his heart to leave his offending daughter without some further expostulation; and therefore returns to vent his feelings further—the diminution of his train first in his mouth, because it is uppermost in his thoughts:

*Lear.* What, fifty of my followers at a chop!

*Albany.* What's the matter, sir?

*Lear.* I'll tell thee;—life and death! I am ashamed  
That thou [*to Goneril.*] hast power to shake my manhood thus:  
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,  
Should make thee worth them.—Blasts and fogs upon thee!  
The untended woundings of a father's curse  
Pierce every sense about thee!—Old fond eyes  
Beweepe this cause again, I'll pluck you out;  
And cast you with the waters that you lose  
To temper clay.—Ha! is it come to this?  
Let it be so:—Yet I have left a daughter,  
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable;  
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails  
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find,  
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think  
I have thrown off for ever; thou shalt find, I warrant thee!

[*Exit Lear with his attendants.*]

As we have traversed this act in detail, word by word with the author, we have at each step felt additional motives to condemn the alterations of this tragedy. There is not a part, or, as Garrick once wrote, "a drop" of it, that can be spared without injury to the piece. A proof of this is, that the reader's mind accompanies the author with delight through every sentence: for it is not only the rapidity, yet correctness—the orderly connexion, yet the vivid spirit, with which the action is conducted, which renders every scene so irresistible, but the sentiments so characteristic and illustrative, and the language in which they are conveyed so forcible, perspicuous and just, (every word being in its proper place, and requisite to the progression of the story) that nothing in the whole appears superfluous, and therefore every thing that is taken away must do an injury. Even the speeches of the Fool, though they retard the action of the play, and, along with it, the march of the mind, are so replete with wit, and, under the guise of idiocy, so full of what Johnson calls axioms of domestic wisdom that, with a very slight alteration,—if judiciously managed,—the character would greatly enhance the value of the play, and the pleasure to be derived from it.

(To be continued.)